



SOCIAL SERVICE REVIEW

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Announcement of Special Issue and Call for Papers: Household Economic Instability and Social Policy

Social Service Review announces a special issue dedicated to studies of household economic instability and social policy. Since the 1970s, changes to the structures of work, family, and social policy have coalesced to expose American families—particularly those with low incomes—to greater variability in family structure, employment and earnings, and public benefit receipt. There is a solid foundation of existing descriptive research on the prevalence of and trends in household economic instability. However, many questions about its causes and consequences, particularly as they relate to social policy, remain to be carefully conceptualized or empirically tested.

We invite submissions from scholars studying household economic instability in multiple disciplines and research fields. For the purposes of this call, *economic instability* is defined as repeated changes in employment, income, or financial well-being over time, particularly changes that are not intentional, predictable, or part of upward mobility. We are also interested in the concept of *economic insecurity*, which includes both actual and perceived economic uncertainty. The papers can engage a broad array of social policies that primarily or disproportionately affect economically vulnerable families, including (but not limited to) means-tested and universal income support (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC], or Social Security), labor regulations governing wages and work hours, housing policy and housing assistance, health insurance, child welfare, criminal justice, and social services (e.g., education, health, child care).

SCOPE AND TOPICS OF INTEREST

We will consider studies that provide new empirical evidence or a major theoretical contribution. Specific topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- The **causes** of economic instability, potentially including factors related to labor markets and employment, family composition, and policy
- The **consequences** of economic instability for child, adult, and community health and well-being
- The specific **mechanisms** by which economic instability affects children, adults, or communities
- How the **designs of specific policies** affect economic instability, positively or negatively
- How economic instability affects **program eligibility, participation, or service provision**
- How **administrative rules or practices** in the provision of social policy and social services affect economic instability
- **Promising practices** for policy design and practice to promote economic stability and mobility

For any of these topics, we encourage submissions that examine differences in the causes and consequences of economic instability by race, ethnicity, or immigration status.

Please direct questions about the scope of this special issue to the guest editors: Heather Hill (hdhill@uw.edu), Marybeth Mattingly (beth.mattingly@unh.edu), and Jennie Romich (romich@uw.edu).

SUBMISSION

Papers should be submitted via the *SSR* Editorial Manager page: <http://www.editorialmanager.com/ucp-ssr/>. Please select “Household Economic Instability Special Issue” as the article type. Submitting authors are required to include a cover letter that briefly explains how their paper contributes to the theme of the special issue. More information for authors can be found here: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/journals/ssr/instruct>. Papers that are selected for review will be evaluated in *SSR*’s normal double-blind process.

Although the schedule, especially the publication date, for any special issue, cannot be guaranteed, we plan to proceed as follows:

- Papers will be accepted through September 15, 2016.
- Peer reviews will be concluded and initial decisions returned to all submitting authors by December 15, 2016.
- The special issue is projected to be published in 2017.

Please contact Nora Malone, managing editor, at ssr@uchicago.edu with any questions.

Heather Hill

Marybeth Mattingly

Jennie Romich

Guest Editors

The Influence of Government Benefits and Taxes on Rates of Chronic and Transient Poverty in the United States

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Stanford University

ABSTRACT This study examines the influence of social welfare and tax policies on rates of chronic and transient poverty in the United States for the full population and subgroups. I use longitudinal data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics ($n = 10,210$) over a recent 11-year time frame (1998–2008), with individuals categorized as poor using the Supplemental Poverty Measure. Results show that including government transfers in family resources reduces the overall transient poverty rate by more than one-sixth and the chronic poverty rate by nearly four-fifths, with a greater influence on the chronic rate in part because some individuals shift from chronic into transient poverty. Income and payroll tax liabilities have negligible influence on poverty rates net of tax credits. Medical expenses are largely associated with an increase in the transient poverty rate. Results imply that there is value to examining the effects of social policy on poverty from more than just the traditional cross-sectional perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The persistence of poverty is important to understanding both the demographics of the poor population and the influence of poverty on life outcomes. Empirical research shows that short-term and long-term poverty differ in the proportion of the population affected, demonstrate somewhat different demographics, and have different causes and prognoses per economic theory. Thus, to understand the problem of poverty in the United States and the influence of social welfare policies on US poverty, it is relevant to examine short-term or transient poverty and long-term or chronic poverty as distinct phenomena.

Poverty in the United States has most often been analyzed using a cross-sectional approach, examining the number and characteristics of households that qualify as poor by comparing annual income to an annual poverty

threshold amount. This measurement approach does not capture information about the time dimension of poverty, specifically the persistence of poverty across multiple years. The measurement lens of chronic versus transient poverty has not been applied extensively in the United States, but it has been used more widely to examine poverty in developing countries (e.g., Morduch 1994; Jalan and Ravallion 1998; Carter and Barrett 2006; Islam 2012). Moreover, the chronic versus transient framework has been productively applied to describe other social problems in the United States, notably homelessness, and to design corresponding policies (Kuhn and Culhane 1998; Burt 2002; Willse 2010). Applying the chronic versus transient lens to the analysis of poverty in the United States allows us to see a more complete picture of the effect of government transfer programs and tax policies on US poverty, providing useful information about policy effects that is not available through more traditional cross-sectional analysis.

The current study examines chronic and transient poverty in the United States during a recent 11-year time frame from 1998 to 2008, a period broadly representative of the current post-welfare reform policy environment. Data for the analysis comprise public-use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID, various years), a nationally representative, long-term, longitudinal study, with an analytic sample of $n = 10,210$.

In place of the official federal poverty measure, this study uses the recently introduced Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), developed by the US Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), to categorize individuals as poor. The SPM was designed to address many of the recognized shortcomings of the official federal poverty measure, including outdated thresholds, unrealistic family definitions, and inadequate accounting for noncash resources. Moreover, use of the SPM facilitates analysis of the influence on poverty rates of a wide range of government transfers, including both cash and noncash benefits, as well as tax policies.

Specifically, this study describes the influence of a range of government benefits (as components of household resources) and federal and state income taxes and federal payroll taxes (as expenses subtracted from resources) on rates of chronic and transient SPM poverty during the 11-year study time frame. The study also examines the influence of medical out-of-pocket expenses on chronic and transient poverty rates during the study period, as medical care is an important current target of federal policy and treatment of medical expenses is also among the more controversial aspects of the SPM. Results from this study show the degree to which the inclusion

of government social welfare benefits and the exclusion of taxes from household resources are associated with reductions or increases in rates of chronic and transient SPM poverty during the 11-year study time frame, with implications for policy design and analysis.

This study examines the mechanical effects on poverty rates of excluding specific benefits and taxes from household resources; it does not model the behavioral responses that would also be expected to result from actually eliminating these programs (e.g., a decline in employment among single parents in the absence of the Earned Income Tax Credit [EITC]). Thus, the calculated counterfactual poverty rates differ somewhat from the poverty rates that would have resulted if the programs did not exist. These counterfactual rates are useful, nonetheless, as estimates of the influence of programs before accounting for behavioral effects. Moreover, reviews of the literature on behavioral effects of means-tested programs document that behavioral effects do exist for many programs but that these are typically small relative to programs' direct antipoverty effects and become negligible relative to direct antipoverty effects when programs are considered in the aggregate (Moffitt 1992; Ben-Shalom, Moffitt, and Scholz 2011). Where relevant, I include a discussion of potential implications of significant behavioral effects.

BACKGROUND

Studies examining the time dimension of poverty in the United States reveal that a substantial proportion of the population experiences poverty at some point during their lifetimes (Duncan 1984; Bane and Elwood 1986; Rank and Hirschl 1999; Cellini, McKernan, and Ratcliffe 2008; Sandoval, Rank, and Hirschl 2009; Yen 2013). However, studies also show that most individuals who enter poverty remain poor for only a short period and then see their incomes rise again above the poverty line (Bane and Elwood 1986; Rank and Hirschl 1999; Cellini et al. 2008; Anderson 2011). It is not uncommon for individuals experiencing short spells of poverty to recover and then re-enter poverty (Stevens 1999; Rank and Hirschl 2001; Cellini et al. 2008). Even when considering poverty experienced across multiple discrete spells, research consistently shows that short-term or transient poverty is much more common than long-term or chronic poverty. For example, Daniel Sandoval, Mark Rank, and Thomas Hirschl (2009) find that 20–37 percent of working-age adults experienced 1 or more years with income below the

official poverty threshold during the decade from 1990 to 2000 but that only 5–7 percent experienced 5 or more years in poverty. Similarly Greg Duncan (1984), analyzing PSID data from 1969 through 1978, reports a 24.4 percent rate of experiencing poverty in at least 1 year of 10 years but only a 2.6 percent rate of being poor in 8 or more of 10 years.

Besides finding that chronic poverty is much less common than transient poverty, studies that partition the US poor population into those experiencing transient versus chronic poverty find that these groups have somewhat different demographic profiles. A general pattern across studies is that demographic groups that are disproportionately likely to experience any poverty (e.g., children, African Americans, and female-headed households) tend to be substantially more overrepresented among the chronically poor than among the transient poor (Duncan 1984; Stevens 1999; Anderson 2011). It is important to note, as well, that though the chronic poor comprise a relatively small proportion of the total population that experiences poverty, they represent a disproportionately large share of the poor population in any given year because of their slow exits from poverty and frequent re-entries into poverty (Corcoran et al. 1985; Bane and Ellwood 1986).

Empirical research shows that chronic or long-term poverty is generally associated with substantially worse life outcomes than transient or short-term poverty. Studies find that adults who experience chronic poverty, compared to those experiencing transient poverty, have lower self-rated health and worse outcomes in terms of functional activity limitations, minor illnesses, chronic health conditions, and mental health problems (Lynch, Kaplan, and Shema 1997; McDonough and Berglund 2003; Kahn and Pearlin 2006). Research consistently shows that among children chronic poverty is associated with more adverse consequences than short-term poverty across multiple domains of well-being. Exposure to chronic poverty in childhood is associated with significantly worse physical health (Chen, Martin, and Matthews 2007), mental health (McLeod and Shanahan 1993; Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov 1994; Korenman, Miller, and Sjaastad 1995; Hanson, McLanahan, and Thomson 1997; Pagani, Boulterice, and Tremblay 1997), and educational outcomes (Korenman et al. 1995; Zill et al. 1995; Pagani et al. 1997), as well as greater childhood cognitive and developmental deficits (Duncan et al. 1994; Korenman et al. 1995; Zill et al. 1995; Smith, Brooks-Gunn, and Klebanov 1997), compared to exposure to transient poverty.

There are also theoretical reasons to understand chronic poverty as different from transient poverty. Transient poverty can be conceptualized

as a temporary income shortfall due to a particular shock (e.g., a job loss), while chronic poverty reflects an ongoing lack of sufficient financial or human assets necessary to predictably secure income above the poverty threshold (e.g., lack of the education required to qualify for a job with sufficiently high wages; Morduch 1994; Jalan and Ravallion 1998; Carter and Barrett 2006). Thus, different policy solutions are implied for each type of poverty. Transient poverty can be addressed through insurance to smooth income fluctuations, while chronic poverty calls for either long-term sustained income support or interventions to build human or financial assets (Lipton and Ravallion 1995; Carter and Barrett 2006).

There are thus multiple empirical and theoretical reasons to consider chronic and transient poverty as distinct problems, affecting somewhat distinct populations and associated with different effects on life outcomes. Given these differences between chronic and transient poverty, it is relevant to consider the influence of government social welfare and tax policies on each type of poverty separately.

The recently introduced SPM, a joint project of the US Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS; ITWG 2010; Short 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), is a useful tool for examining the influence of government benefit and tax policies on poverty. The SPM was designed to address many of the widely recognized limitations of the official US federal poverty measure, including outdated thresholds, unrealistic resource-sharing units, and inadequate accounting for noncash resources and nondiscretionary expenses (Citro and Michael 1995; Hutto et al. 2011; Short 2011a).

Most importantly for this study, the SPM better accounts for the current structure of government social welfare policies designed to address poverty, a system that emphasizes near-cash in-kind benefits and indirect payments such as tax credits over unrestricted direct cash payments (Citro and Michael 1995; Besharov 2007; Blank 2008). These types of near-cash benefits (such as food stamps or housing subsidies) are counted toward household resources under the SPM, but they are ignored under the official federal poverty measure. The SPM also accounts for the influence of tax policy on poverty, unlike the official poverty measure. Thus, under the SPM, tax credits are counted toward financial resources, so money received through credits such as the EITC and the refundable Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) is added to family resources. Taxes paid (income and payroll taxes) are also treated as nondiscretionary household expenses that are excluded from household resources under the SPM before comparing family resources to

poverty thresholds (Citro and Michael 1995; Short 2011a). Consequently, the SPM is well suited to analyzing the influence of the contemporary range of government safety net benefits and tax policies on poverty rates.

The SPM is widely accepted but is not without its critics. The treatment of medical expenses under the SPM, in particular, has been most controversial (Meyer and Sullivan 2012; Korenman and Remler 2013). Some have argued that a consumption measure of poverty performs better than the SPM in identifying the poor (Meyer and Sullivan 2012), though others disagree about the merits of a consumption measure for poverty analysis (Bavier 2008, 2014). While I acknowledge these critiques, I maintain that the SPM is an appropriate poverty measurement tool for this analysis because it is a standardized alternative approach to measuring US poverty that addresses many of the known problems with the official US poverty measure and that facilitates production of the types of counterfactual poverty rates that are the focus of this study (and that cannot be produced using a consumption measure of poverty, as noted by Hoynes [2012]).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND THE CURRENT STUDY

In recent years, a number of studies have examined the influence of government benefit and tax policies on income trends and on annual US poverty rates, primarily using the official federal poverty measure. Income growth and income inequality appear substantially different when government transfers and taxes are included in income measures (Armour, Burkhauser, and Larrimore 2014), and income declines during the Great Recession appear less dramatic compared to earlier recessions when tax policies and noncash government transfers are taken into account (Larrimore, Burkhauser, and Armour 2015). In terms of poverty reduction, James Ziliak (2011) examines official annual poverty rates for the years 1999–2009 and finds that cash transfers (including social insurance) reduced annual official poverty rates by an average of 41 percent and that adding tax credits plus in-kind transfers to family resources resulted on average in an additional 16 percent reduction in official poverty rates. Furthermore, cash transfers reduced aggregate annual poverty gaps (the difference between incomes and poverty thresholds) by an average of 60 percent, and the addition of tax credits plus in-kind transfers reduced the gaps by another 16 percent, on average.

Several studies explore the extent to which government transfers and government outlays explain or alter trends in official poverty rates over

time, finding, for example, a greater decline in annual poverty rates in the 1980s and 1990s when calculated using post-tax, post-in-kind transfer income (Meyer and Sullivan 2009, 2013), a declining influence of government transfers on the aggregate poverty gap from the 1980s to the mid-2000s (Scholz, Moffitt, and Cowan 2009), a stagnant rate of reduction in the poverty rate and aggregate poverty gap due to government transfers during the 2000s (Ziliak 2011), little influence on the official poverty rate from changes in government transfer outlays from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s (Hoynes, Page, and Stevens 2006), a substantial drop in the share of families with children experiencing extreme poverty when including food stamps and tax credits in household income (Shaefer and Edin 2013), and increasing exposure to cyclical effects of economic downturns for individuals at the lowest levels of income and income-to-poverty following welfare reform, as well as increases in the countercyclical protection of food stamps in the post-welfare reform era (Bitler and Hoynes 2010, 2015).

These studies all examine the influence of government transfers and tax policy on annual poverty rates using the official federal poverty thresholds. However, the official poverty thresholds were developed in the 1960s and do not reflect current patterns of household spending on basic needs (Citro and Michael 1995; Glennerster 2002; Hutto et al. 2011; Short 2011a). Poverty thresholds under the SPM are explicitly derived from current patterns of expenditures on basic needs (using the immediately prior 5 years of data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey) and are adjusted for geographic differences in cost of living, so it is valuable to examine the influence of government transfers and taxes on annual poverty rates using SPM thresholds.

The Census Bureau has used the SPM to quantify the influence of a range of government assistance programs and taxes on cross-sectional annual SPM poverty from 2010 forward by recalculating annual poverty rates after excluding specific benefits from household financial resources or after adding taxes to household resources (Short 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). These analyses have shown, for example, that in 2014, Social Security payments had the largest influence on annual SPM poverty of the major government transfer programs, reducing the overall poverty rate by 8.3 percentage points. Refundable tax credits (including the EITC) had the next largest influence, associated with a 2.8 percentage point reduction in the annual poverty rate, while food stamps produced a 1.7 percentage point reduction. In terms of tax liabilities, payroll tax (Federal Insurance Con-

tributions Act [FICA]) had the largest effect, increasing the annual poverty rate by 1.6 percentage points, while federal income tax was associated with a very modest change, increasing the poverty rate by 0.5 percentage points (Short 2015). The patterns of policy associations with SPM annual poverty rates were similar in 2010 through 2013 (Short 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2014). Other researchers have performed similar analyses using state and local SPM-like poverty measures (Wheaton et al. 2011; NYCEO 2012; Cable 2013; Chung, Isaacs, and Smeeding 2013; Wimer et al. 2015) and examining effects on annual SPM poverty rates across several decades (Fox et al. 2015).

While the results outlined above are informative, all of them describe the influence of policy on annual poverty rates only. They do not consider how social welfare or tax policies have affected the number of individuals experiencing poverty across multiple years or whether policies have had a different influence on short-term versus long-term poverty. Indeed, prior research on the influence of government policies on chronic and transient poverty in the United States is very limited and mostly not very recent. A handful of studies from the 1970s to the mid-2000s have examined the influence of cash benefits, food stamps, and tax credits on long-term and in some cases shorter-term poverty, defined using official poverty thresholds.

Greg Duncan (1984) examines the influence of cash welfare and food stamps on short- and long-term poverty (defined using the official poverty measure) during the 1970s and finds that cash welfare modestly reduced the percentage of individuals who were officially poor in 1 or more of 10 years from 25.8 percent to 24.4 percent, while more substantially reducing the percentage of individuals who were poor in 5 or more of 10 years from 8.5 percent to 5.5 percent. Food stamps were associated with a somewhat smaller reduction in poverty during the years when they were available. In another study using data from the 1980s, Duncan and Willard Rodgers, (1988) compare measures of persistent poverty (defined as permanent income-to-needs ratio below 1.0, using the official poverty threshold) for children. They find that adding the value of food stamps and subtracting the value of income and payroll taxes from family incomes resulted in a nearly 50 percent drop in the proportion of black children in extreme persistent poverty (income-to-needs ratio below 0.75, using the official poverty threshold) from 26.3 percent to 13.4 percent, with lesser changes for white children and for children experiencing less extreme poverty.

More recently, Lloyd Grieger and Jessica Wyse (2013) examined the influence of cash welfare, food stamps, and tax credits (net of tax liabilities)

on persistent poverty for two cohorts of children, a pre-welfare reform “cash entitlement” cohort aged 0–10 years old in 1987 (observed until 1995) and a post-welfare reform “wage supplement” cohort aged 0–10 in 1997 (observed until 2005). They define persistent poverty as average income-to-needs ratio below 1.0, using the official poverty threshold. They find that for the pre-welfare reform cohort, the examined government assistance programs reduced persistent poverty by roughly one-sixth, from 18.4 percent to 15.1 percent. For the post-welfare reform cohort, the government assistance was associated with a larger reduction, reducing persistent poverty by nearly one-third, from 14.6 percent to 9.8 percent.

These prior studies examining policy influence on longitudinal poverty have some limitations. Most examine data from the pre-welfare reform era, when the social welfare policy environment was significantly different than today, and thus their findings may not be as relevant to the current policy context. Most only examine the influence of policies on long-term or persistent poverty, not on transient poverty as well. These studies also examine a fairly limited range of government programs, namely, cash welfare, food stamps, and in one case tax credits, leaving out several types of near-cash assistance that families use to meet basic needs (e.g., housing subsidies). Finally, all of these studies categorize households as poor using official poverty measure thresholds, though these thresholds poorly reflect current patterns of spending on basic needs and do not account for geographic differences in costs.

The current study thus seeks to expand our understanding of the influence of social welfare and tax policy on poverty in the United States by examining both chronic and transient poverty during a recent time frame that is broadly representative of the current post-welfare reform policy context and considering a wide range of benefits as well as taxes. This exercise is facilitated by use of the SPM, which explicitly accounts for noncash as well as cash benefits and taxes to categorize households as poor. Using this standardized poverty measure facilitates comparison of these results to other studies of US poverty that use the SPM.

DATA AND METHODS

This study uses public-use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), a longitudinal, nationally representative data set administered by the Survey Research Center at the Institute for Social Research at the

University of Michigan, with income and demographic information collected biennially. PSID data are publicly available and were downloaded from the PSID website for this study. I use data from the 11-year time frame of 1998–2008, representing the period from the first full year of implementation of welfare reform to the start of the Great Recession, which are thus broadly representative of the post-welfare-reform policy context.¹

The sample for this study includes individuals interviewed in all years for biennial years 1998–2008 (surveyed in years 1999–2009; $n = 10,210$), using PSID-provided survey weights that reweight the sample to account for individuals who have dropped out of the longitudinal survey over time. Biennial data collection produces 6 years of income and expense data (for 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008) for each individual over the 11-year time frame. A major limitation of PSID data for years prior to the study period is that the sample does not represent the immigrant population of the United States. This is because the long-term panel follows individuals who were present in the United States in 1968 when the study was launched and their partners and descendants, so that individuals who immigrated to the United States after 1968 are largely excluded from the sample. The PSID addressed this problem by adding a “refresher” sample of post-1968 immigrant families in the 1997 and 1999 waves of the survey; these individuals are included in the sample for this study. PSID-provided survey weights are used in all analyses to account for differential initial sampling and sample attrition over time. With these weights, the PSID sample is designed to be representative of the national US population. Following recommended practice in PSID research (Gouskova et al. 2008), the PSID survey weights for the final study year (2009 individual longitudinal weights) are used. Stata MP/13 statistical software was used for all analyses.

CALCULATING ANNUAL SPM STATUS

The SPM is used to categorize individuals as poor in a given year. The SPM was initially developed using the Census Current Population Survey (CPS).

1. The study period intentionally excludes 2010, when the Great Recession was fully underway, in order to avoid the exceptional macroeconomic circumstances of the Great Recession and the exceptional temporary expansions of government benefits associated with the Great Recession. The intent is to examine a time frame generally representative of the post-welfare-reform tax and safety net policy system as it operates under normal conditions of economic expansion and contraction.

Researchers at the Census Bureau and the BLS and in academia and policy practice have also constructed the SPM and similar measures in the American Community Survey (ACS) and more recently in the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS; Levitan et al. 2010; Zedlewski, Giannarelli, and Wheaton 2010; Short and Garner 2012; Short and Giefer 2013; Chavez, Wimer, and Betson 2014). However, prior to this study, the SPM had not been implemented in the PSID; thus, annual SPM status was first constructed in this data set, as described in brief below. Full details of the method used for calculating SPM poverty status in this study are described in the work of Sara Kimberlin, H. Luke Shaefer, and Jiyo Kim (2016).²

A variety of PSID variables are used to calculate SPM poverty status for each sample member. Annual poverty status under the SPM is calculated by summing a specified set of cash and in-kind family resources and subtracting specified necessary expenses. The resulting family resource amount is then compared to a specified threshold amount designed to reflect necessary basic expenditures for food, clothing, shelter, and utilities, adjusted for family composition as well as for housing status and geographic location (Short 2011a). The basic method for calculating SPM poverty status in this study is closely modeled on the procedures used by the Census Bureau to calculate the SPM in the CPS (Short 2011a), with exceptions as needed to account for differences in the data available in the public-use PSID files.

The PSID definition of family closely matches the SPM definition of poverty unit, with cohabiters and their relatives included as family members. Thus, PSID family units are used as poverty units when calculating SPM status. Families are assigned one of three baseline SPM thresholds based on housing tenure (whether a family owns their home with a mortgage, owns without a mortgage, or rents). Official SPM thresholds are currently only available from the Census Bureau and the BLS for the years 2005 forward. For earlier years, thresholds produced by other SPM researchers are used, including thresholds produced by BLS researchers for 2002 and 2004 (developed for research described in Garner and Gudrais [2012]) and thresholds produced by independent researchers at Columbia University for 1998 and 2000 (developed for research described in Fox et al. [2015]).

2. A public-use data set of the individual-level annual SPM status values used here will be available for download on the PSID website (<http://simba.isr.umich.edu/help/UgenVars.aspx>).

These thresholds are then adjusted based on residential location to account for geographic differences in cost of living. The Census/BLS SPM procedures for geographic adjustment rely on US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administrative data, so an alternative method is used here, modeled on a method used in prior Census Bureau experimental poverty measures (Short 2001) using the population-weighted average of the Fair Market Rents published by HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2012) for each year, for metro and nonmetro areas by state. Thresholds are then adjusted for differences in size and composition of families, using the SPM equivalence scale (Short 2011a, 2011b).

Next, family resources are calculated by first adding to cash income the value of several cash-equivalent government benefits, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP), housing subsidies, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), heating subsidies (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP), and school lunch and breakfast.³ Certain nondiscretionary expenses are then subtracted from family resources, including child care and other work-related expenses, child support and alimony paid,⁴ and medical out-of-pocket expenses. Values for many of these items are directly reported in the PSID, and Census/BLS procedures are followed to calculate values for several others, as shown in table 1. Methods differ from Census/BLS procedures in a few cases due to the structure of PSID data, as described below.

Housing subsidy receipt is reported in the PSID, but the Census/BLS SPM method for estimating subsidy value relies on HUD administrative data and metropolitan statistical area (MSA)-specific geographic data and thus cannot be implemented with PSID public-use data.⁵ Consequently,

3. School breakfast is not included in Census/BLS SPM as calculated in the CPS because the CPS lacks data on participation in this program. It is included in this study as a government transfer directly targeted to meeting basic needs for food, parallel to school lunch, which is included in the Census/BLS SPM in the CPS. Including school breakfast has minimal effect on calculated SPM poverty rates.

4. Alimony paid is not subtracted from resources in Census/BLS SPM as calculated in the CPS due to lack of data in the CPS. It is included in this study as a nondiscretionary expense parallel to child support paid, which is included in the Census/BLS SPM in the CPS. Including alimony paid has very minimal effect on calculated SPM poverty rates.

5. This study used public-use PSID data, which do not include MSA-level geographic identifiers. Restricted-use PSID data with geographic identifiers would allow for more precise calculation of the threshold geographic adjustment and the housing subsidy value, but differences are

TABLE 1. Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Resource and Expense Parameters and Derivation from Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) Data

Household Resources/Additions	Derivation from PSID Data
Cash income	Value reported in PSID.
Federal and state tax credits (e.g., EITC [Earned Income Tax Credit], Additional Child Tax Credit)	Calculated using NBER's TAXSIM. EITC amount, then subtracted for ineligible immigrants.
SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance [food stamps])	Value reported in PSID.
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program benefits	Receipt but not value reported in PSID. Value estimated following Census CPS-SPM method.
School lunch and breakfast	Receipt but not value reported in PSID. Value estimated following Census CPS-SPM method.
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits	Value reported in PSID.
Housing subsidy	Receipt but not value reported in PSID. To calculate value, first household rent payment amount calculated per HUD tenant rent rules based on income and household characteristics reported in PSID. Then rent amount subtracted from portion of SPM threshold representing geographically adjusted shelter costs, to obtain estimated value of housing subsidy.
Household expenses/subtractions:	
Child care expenses	Value reported in PSID.
Other work-related expenses	Number of weeks worked by head and wife reported in PSID. Value of work-related expenses calculated following Census CPS-SPM method.
Child support and alimony paid	Value reported in PSID.
MOOP (Medical out-of-pocket expenses)	Value reported in PSID for 2-year period prior to survey date. Divided by two to obtain estimated value for past year.

housing subsidy value is instead estimated as the difference between the housing portion of the SPM threshold and the family rent contribution as calculated from HUD tenant payment rules (US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2010).⁶

unlikely to be substantial at the national level, given that the methods used here do adjust for both state of residence and metro versus nonmetro area. Restricted-use data are also available that link PSID records to administrative records of subsidized housing units. However, given the relatively small number of households nationally receiving housing subsidies (compared to the number participating in other programs like food stamps or the EITC), the difference in associated poverty reduction seems unlikely to be dramatically different using these administrative data, though exploring the use of these restricted data could be valuable in future research.

6. This method of estimating the value of housing subsidies does not necessarily capture the market rate value of the subsidy, but rather reflects the degree to which the subsidy allowed households to meet their basic need for shelter.

Taxes are included in the SPM as both resources (i.e., tax credits such as the EITC and refundable Child Tax Credit) and nondiscretionary expenses (specifically payroll taxes and income tax liabilities). Taxes are not reported in the PSID, but they are rather calculated here based on reported income data using the external TAXSIM tax calculator (Feenberg and Coutts 1993), building on the procedure for using TAXSIM with PSID data outlined in Barbara Butrica and Richard Burkhauser's paper (1997), with multiple tax units constructed within PSID households based on family relationships. Details of the method used are described in the work of Kimberlin and colleagues (2014). Included in TAXSIM calculations are estimates for the EITC, which is only available to tax filers with valid Social Security numbers. Thus, calculated EITC amounts are set to 0 for tax filers identified in PSID data as immigrants ineligible for legal employment. All other tax filers eligible for the EITC are assumed to claim the credit.⁷ Census SPM procedures similarly use a tax calculator to estimate income and payroll taxes, assuming that all eligible filers claim the credit.

The resulting final family resource amounts are compared to the assigned SPM poverty thresholds to determine SPM poverty status for each year. Individuals in families with resources less than their assigned threshold amounts are categorized as SPM poor for that year.

In general, the PSID has very low levels of missing data in the items required to calculate SPM status. The one notable exception with a larger proportion of missing data is medical out-of-pocket expenses (MOOP), which are reported in four variables in the PSID: health insurance premiums; nursing home and hospital bills; doctor, outpatient surgery, and dental bills; and prescriptions, in-home medical care, special facilities, and other services. Across the 6 years of data, 7–19 percent of individuals had missing values in one or more household MOOP components in each year. Missing MOOP values in each variable for each year are imputed using a two-step hotdeck procedure, drawing values from PSID households with nonmissing MOOP, modeled on the approach described in David Betson's work (2001).

7. This assumption could result in an overstatement of the influence of the EITC because some eligible workers do not claim the credit, though in fact total EITC receipts calculated from survey data with tax calculators generally understate total IRS EITC outlays (Meyer, Mok, and Sullivan 2015b).

Sensitivity analyses show that estimated values match reported MOOP values reasonably well. Moreover, when substituting imputed total MOOP values for reported MOOP for a subsample of one-third of households, 97.8 percent of households in the subsample have no change in annual SPM poverty status.

The incidence of item-missing data in other individual SPM components is very low, amounting to less than 1 percent per year in each component. Values are imputed for all of these other item-missing components as well, using regression models (for components with greater influence on SPM poverty rates) or simple substitution of the mean nonzero reported value (for components with minimal influence on SPM rates). Sensitivity analyses show that these additional imputations have minimal effects on calculated annual SPM status or rates.⁸

After the imputations described above, valid values for annual SPM status are available for more than 99 percent of individuals in each year who have valid PSID interview data for that year, and they are available in all 6 years examined for 98 percent of individuals who have PSID interview data in all years. Annual SPM poverty rates in the PSID, as calculated using the methods described above, are somewhat lower than annual SPM poverty rates calculated in the CPS, though the trends over time are very similar. Lower SPM rates in the PSID are not surprising, since annual official poverty rates are also known to be lower when calculated in the PSID versus in the CPS (Grieger, Danziger, and Schoeni 2009). The differences in annual SPM rates calculated in the two surveys stem from somewhat larger reported cash incomes among households in the bottom half of the income distribution in the PSID, as well as somewhat higher reported noncash benefits and lower reported MOOP in the PSID, compared to the CPS. However, the relative change in annual SPM poverty associated with excluding

8. Considering item-missing data in MOOP as well as other SPM components, an average of 15.0 percent of individuals in each year require imputation of one or more item-missing values in order to calculate annual SPM status. This rate of imputation for item-missing data is not particularly unusual for survey data (though it becomes less visible when survey administrators provide imputed values). For example, in the March CPS, the data set used for most prior SPM research, approximately 10 percent of cases in each survey year are wholly imputed, and an additional 30 percent of cases in each year have one or more item-missing imputations in income data (Turek et al. 2009).

individual SPM components is broadly similar between the PSID and the CPS (Kimberlin et al. 2016).

DEFINING CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT POVERTY STATUS

This study primarily focuses on examining how the contemporary post-welfare reform policy package of government transfers and taxes affects rates of chronic and transient poverty. This focus, combined with the structure of the data, drives the choice of method used to categorize individuals as chronic or transient poor.

One decision in conceptualizing chronic versus transient poverty is whether to define the time frame for analysis in terms of the life course of the individuals examined (e.g., were individuals chronic or transient poor during childhood? or from birth to age 70?), versus in terms of a set period of years (e.g., were individuals chronic or transient poor during the 1990s?). The second approach is adopted for this study, which answers the question of how many individuals experienced chronic or transient poverty during the time span from the full implementation of welfare reform (1998) to the beginning of the Great Recession (2008) and how those numbers change if government transfers and taxes are excluded from family resources. This set of years represents a fairly stable government antipoverty policy context that is broadly representative of the current post-welfare reform package of government transfers and taxes that mitigate or exacerbate poverty.⁹ Defining chronic and transient poverty in terms of this time frame, then, aligns the measure of longitudinal poverty with the study's focus on the social welfare policy context.

9. This is not to say that there were no policy changes during this time period; in fact, there were some shifts in food stamps policy over this period, as well as some changes to extended unemployment benefits, but these policy shifts were arguably less radical than the changes embodied in welfare reform (see Bitler and Hoynes [2010] for an overview of safety net policy changes during this period). Note that the desire to focus on a relatively constant policy context led to the decision to exclude from this study data from the year 2010, though these data are available in the PSID. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), passed in 2009, temporarily expanded a number of government programs substantially (e.g., food stamps, unemployment benefits) to respond to the Great Recession, creating a temporarily altered antipoverty policy context that would be reflected in 2010 data. Most of those expansions have subsequently been rolled back.

Given the focus on longitudinal poverty during a specific time frame, there are two possible basic approaches for categorizing individuals as chronic or transient poor: a spells or tabulation approach of summing the number of years that income is below the year-specific poverty threshold (e.g., poor in 3 of 5 years) or a components approach of comparing a measure of long-term income to a long-term poverty threshold (the most basic approach being a comparison of average income across, e.g., 5 years, to the average poverty threshold across the same years; Yaqub 2000; Hulme, Moore, and Shepherd 2001; Foster 2009).¹⁰ The components approach implicitly assumes that income is perfectly transferable across time periods via savings and credit, so that an income surplus above the poverty line in one year can compensate for an income gap below the poverty line in another year, while the tabulation or spells approach assumes that income is not transferable from one period to another (Foster 2009). Because the SPM used in this analysis is an income-based measure of poverty that does not incorporate assets under the definition of resources, it is more consistent for this study to adopt the spells or tabulation approach to defining chronic and transient poverty, which similarly focuses on current income and does not implicitly introduce wealth or debt (in the form of savings and credit) into the poverty measurement model. The policies examined in this study are also typically tied to current needs (in the case of benefits) or income (in the case of taxes), rather than long-term income or needs, again implying that the spells or tabulation approach is appropriate.

Thus, first, the number of years in annual SPM poverty is tabulated for all individuals. The distribution of years poor for individuals poor in at least 1 year is shown in figure 1. Individuals are categorized as chronic poor if they are poor in more than half of the years examined (i.e., poor in 4 or more of the 6 data years), following the generally accepted conceptualization of chronic poverty as poor most or all of the time (Hulme et al. 2001; Hulme and Shepard 2003; Islam 2012). Individuals categorized as transient poor

10. These are the terms as typically used in the development economics literature. In the US poverty dynamics literature, the term *spell-based* is more often used to refer more narrowly to hazard rate analysis of discrete poverty spells (Bane and Ellwood 1986; Stevens 1999; Cellini et al. 2008). As used more broadly in development economics, the term also includes the more basic method of counting the total number of periods in poverty over a given time frame, often referred to in the US poverty dynamics literature as the tabulation or count method (Cellini et al. 2008).

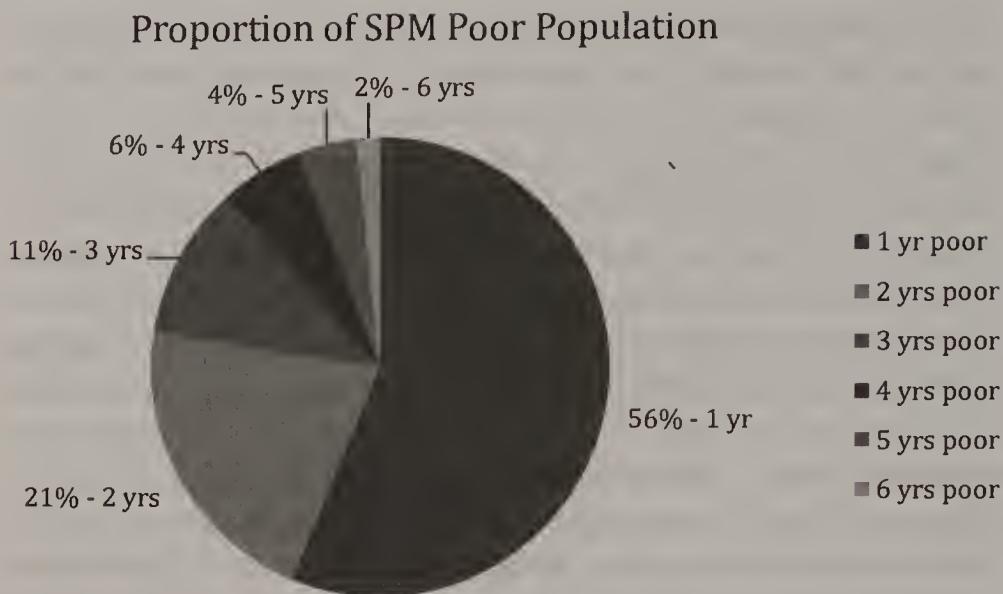


FIGURE 1. Proportion of Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) poor population 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 years in SPM poverty, biennial years 1998–2008. Source: Author's calculations from PSID data.

are those who were poor in at least 1 year but not more than half of the years (i.e., poor in 1–3 of the 6 data years).¹¹

CALCULATING CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT POVERTY RATES

Rates of transient and chronic poverty measured using the SPM are calculated first with all SPM income and expense components of family resources included. Then transient and chronic poverty rates are recalculated with specific resource or expense components excluded from family resources in order to identify the reduction or increase in measured rates of transient or chronic poverty associated with specific income or expense items. For example, the value of food stamps is subtracted from family resources for each year, annual SPM poverty status for each year is recalculated with food stamps excluded, and then the transient and chronic poverty rates are

11. Results were also calculated using an alternative cutoff for chronic poverty of poor in 3 or more of the 6 data years (with transient poverty therefore defined as poor in 1 or 2 of the 6 data years). By definition, this alternate cutoff assigns more individuals to chronic poverty (5.4 percent are chronic poor with the 3-year cutoff vs. 2.8 percent with the 4-year cutoff) and fewer to transient poverty (18.6 percent are transient poor with the 3-year cutoff vs. 21.3 percent with the 4-year cutoff). Otherwise, however, the pattern of results is not substantially different in terms of the relative influence of specific benefits and expenses, or overall benefits, on chronic and transient poverty rates. Detailed comparative results are available from the author upon request.

recalculated based on these revised annual poverty statuses. The difference between the original transient and chronic poverty rates and the recalculated poverty rates thus indicates the proportion of individuals who would be transient or chronic poor if they had never received food stamps during the study time frame (without considering the additional behavioral effects that might be associated with eliminating food stamps as a policy).

To examine the roles of different types of government benefits in reducing transient and chronic poverty, benefits are grouped into three categories: refundable tax credits (EITC and Additional Child Tax Credit [ACTC]), social insurance benefits (Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, and Social Security), and residual public assistance benefits (e.g., food stamps and Supplemental Security Income [SSI], among others). These three types of government programs are funded differently and are viewed differently by the public, with tax credits and social insurance programs generally viewed more favorably than public assistance programs. The EITC is based only on earned income and can be viewed as a work incentive program or labor market intervention to raise low wages (for select workers) as much as a safety net program. Social insurance benefits are paid to individuals who have made prior contributions to the work-based insurance system (or have had contributions made by their family members), and income from these benefits is generally counted toward eligibility for public assistance programs. Public assistance can be viewed as the safety net of last resort, comprising the residual benefits available to individuals who are unable to support themselves through work or social insurance.

In calculating the poverty rate reduction attributable to each of these types of benefits, they are considered here sequentially. First, poverty status is calculated with market income only, excluding all government benefits from resources. Then refundable tax credits are added to family resources,¹² resulting in a revised post-tax-credit poverty rate. Comparing this post-tax-credit poverty rate to the market-income-only poverty rate provides a measure of the reduction in poverty from tax credits. Next, social insurance benefits are added to post-tax-credit family resources. The resulting post-social-insurance poverty rate can be compared to the post-tax-credit poverty rate to show the additional poverty reduction from social insurance after tax credits have been taken into account. Finally, public assistance

12. The refundable ACTC is grouped here with the EITC for simplicity of presentation, though it differs from the EITC by not being linked specifically to earned income. Compared to the EITC, the ACTC has a much smaller influence on poverty rates.

benefits are added to post-tax-credit, post-social-insurance resources. This post-public-assistance poverty rate can then be compared to the post-social-insurance rate to isolate the marginal poverty rate reduction from public assistance programs after accounting for poverty rate reduction from both tax credits and social insurance.

A similar analysis is conducted for medical out-of-pocket (MOOP) expenses. Each of the four medical expense components is first excluded separately to show the separate changes in poverty rates associated with health insurance premiums, nursing home/hospital bills, doctor/dental/outpatient surgery bills, and prescription/in-home services/specialty facilities/other services. Then an additional analysis is presented showing first the change in poverty rate when premiums are not subtracted from resources, and then the additional change in poverty rate when excluding all other medical expenses combined, after excluding premiums. The rationale for this second analysis is that individuals with insurance must pay insurance premiums first, whether or not they incur additional non-premium out-of-pocket expenses.

Results of all analyses are examined for the overall study sample and for several subgroups of interest: individuals in senior households (defined as living in a household with someone age 65 or older in 1 or more years), individuals in households with children (defined as living in a household with someone age 17 or younger in 1 or more years), individuals in single-parent households (defined as living in a household with someone age 17 or younger and no more than one adult in 1 or more years),¹³ individuals in non-single-parent households with children (defined as living in a household with someone age 17 or younger in 1 or more years but never also with no more than one adult), and individuals in households headed by black, Hispanic, white, and other race/ethnicity household heads in the first year of the study.¹⁴

It is worth noting that this study relies on reported receipt and reported amounts of means-tested benefits (both cash and noncash), though such benefits are known to be underreported in the PSID as in most survey data (Meyer et al. 2015a, 2015b). Thus, the results below likely understate the

13. Note that this is a restrictive definition of single parents that excludes single-parent nuclear families living with cohabiting partners as well as those living with other nonpartner adults (e.g., extended family members).

14. Race/ethnicity is available in the PSID only for head of household and wife/cohabiter, and thus this household-level measure is used here for all individuals for consistency.

mechanical effect on poverty rates of excluding benefits from family resources.

RESULTS

RATES OF TRANSIENT AND CHRONIC POVERTY

A total of 24.1 percent of individuals—or nearly one in four—are poor in at least 1 year of the 6 years examined. Decomposing this group into transient versus chronic poor, the overall transient SPM poverty rate is 21.3 percent, while the chronic SPM poverty rate is 2.8 percent. Thus, more than one in five individuals experiences short-term poverty over the 11-year study time frame, but only one in 35 is poor for more than half of the years examined.

OVERALL INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS ON CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT SPM POVERTY RATES

Table 2 shows the effect on transient and chronic poverty rates of excluding specific government benefits and taxes from household resources for the overall sample. Examining the influence of all government benefits combined shows that without the inclusion of a variety of cash and near-cash government benefits (including tax credits), these poverty rates would be substantially higher. A full 38.8 percent of individuals would be poor in at least 1 year of the 6 years examined. Decomposing these individuals into chronic and transient poor, 25.3 percent of individuals would be transient poor, and 13.5 percent would be chronic poor with government benefits excluded.

The inclusion of government benefits is thus associated with a significant reduction in the rates of both types of SPM poverty and with a greater relative and absolute reduction in chronic poverty. Including government benefits reduces the transient poverty rate by more than one-sixth, or 4.0 percentage points, while reducing the chronic poverty rate by nearly four-fifths, or 10.7 percentage points.

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS SHIFTING INDIVIDUALS FROM CHRONIC POVERTY INTO TRANSIENT POVERTY

It is important to note that the reduction in chronic poverty associated with government benefits represents a combination of two distinct phenomena:

TABLE 2. Transient and Chronic Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Rates, 1999–2008 (with Biennial Data), without and with Government Benefits (n = 10,210)

	Transient Poverty				Chronic Poverty			
	Transient Poverty Rate	SE (95% CI)	Percentage Point Difference in Rate	Chronic Poverty Rate	SE (95% CI)	Percentage Point Difference in Rate		
SPM with market income (MI) only (all government benefits excluded)	25.3	.9 (23.5, 27.2)		13.5	.8 (12.0, 15.2)			
Adding refundable tax credits:			Difference in rate (vs. MI only):			Difference in rate (vs. MI only):		
Federal and state EITC only	25.0	.9 (23.3, 26.8)	-.3	12.1	.7 (10.7, 13.6)	-.4*		
Federal Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) only	25.2	.9 (23.5, 27.1)	-.1	13.3	.8 (11.8, 15.0)	-.2*		
All refundable tax credits	25.1	.9 (23.3, 26.9)	-.2	11.8	.7 (10.5, 13.2)	-.17*		
Adding social insurance (SI) benefits (after adding refundable tax credits):			Difference in rate (vs. MI + tax credits):			Difference in rate (vs. MI + tax credits):		
Unemployment Insurance only	24.4	.9 (22.6, 26.2)	-.7*	11.4	.6 (10.2, 12.7)	-.4*		
Workers' Compensation only	25.1	.9 (23.4, 26.9)	.0	11.7	.7 (10.4, 13.1)	-.1*		
Social Security (retirement, survivors', and disability) only	22.9	.8 (21.4, 24.5)	-.2*	6.2	.7 (5.0, 7.6)	-.56*		
All SI benefits (after adding refundable tax credits)	22.0	.8 (20.5, 23.5)	-.31*	5.8	.6 (4.7, 7.2)	-.60*		
Adding public assistance benefits (after adding refundable tax credits and SI):			Difference in rate (vs. MI + tax credits + SI):			Difference in rate (vs. MI + tax credits + SI):		
Food stamps (SNAP) only	21.9	.8 (20.4, 23.5)	-.1	5.1	.5 (4.2, 6.3)	-.7*		
School lunch and breakfast only	21.6	.8 (20.1, 23.2)	-.4*	5.4	.6 (4.3, 6.7)	-.4*		
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program) only	21.8	.7 (20.3, 23.3)	-.2*	5.7	.6 (4.6, 7.1)	-.1*		
Housing subsidy only	22.2	.8 (20.6, 23.8)	.2 ^a	5.1	.5 (4.2, 6.3)	-.7*		
Energy subsidy (LIHEAP) only	21.9	.7 (20.4, 23.4)	-.1	5.8	.6 (4.7, 7.2)	.0		
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) only	22.2	.8 (20.8, 23.8)	.2 ^a	5.3	.6 (4.2, 6.7)	-.5*		
Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) only	22.0	.8 (20.5, 23.5)	.0	5.8	.6 (4.7, 7.1)	.0		
All public assistance benefits (after adding refundable tax credits and SI)	21.3	.8 (19.7, 22.9)	-.7	2.8	.4 (2.1, 3.7)	-.30*		
Full SPM with all government benefits included	21.3	.8 (19.7, 22.9)	-4.0*	2.8	.4 (2.1, 3.7)	-.10.7*		

^a Net increase in transient poverty due to individuals shifting from chronic to transient poverty.

* p < .05.

some individuals shift from chronic poverty into a nonpoor state, while others shift from chronic poverty into transient poverty. When individuals shift out of chronic poverty into transient poverty, the chronic poverty rate shrinks, but the transient poverty rate simultaneously increases. To explore this phenomenon further, I conducted additional analysis to calculate chronic and transient poverty rates after excluding all government benefits for the transient poor and nonpoor subsamples only. This procedure allows for identification of the proportion of nonpoor individuals who would be transient or chronic poor with government benefits excluded, as well as the proportion of transient poor individuals who would be chronic poor with benefits excluded. Results are shown in figure 2. The inclusion of all government benefits combined raises 10.8 percent of individuals overall from transient poverty to nonpoor status, lifts 4.0 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to nonpoor status, and shifts 6.8 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to transient poverty. Another way of viewing this phenomenon is to note that nearly one third of transient poor individuals in the overall sample would be chronically poor with government benefits excluded from resources.

**Effect of including all government benefits in family resources
(versus market income only)**

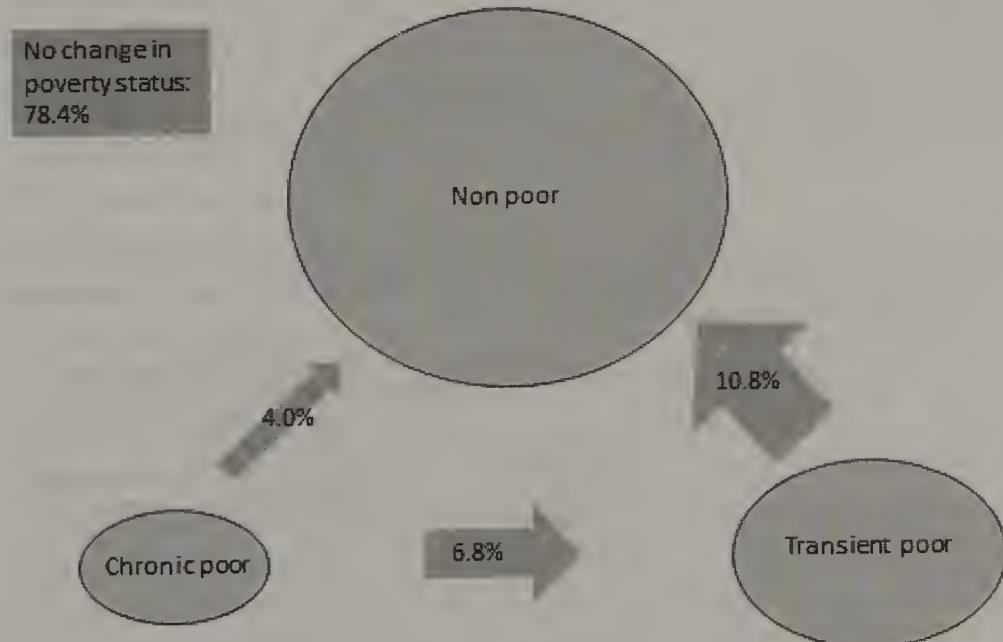


FIGURE 2. Percent of overall population with shift in SPM longitudinal poverty status when government benefits are included in resources. Source: Author's calculations from PSID data.

**INFLUENCE OF SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT BENEFITS ON
CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT SPM POVERTY RATES**

I group government benefits into three categories—refundable tax credits, social insurance benefits, and public assistance benefits—and also examine the poverty reduction associated with each of these categories of benefits in sequence. First, adding refundable tax credits to market-income-only resources results in a significant net reduction in the chronic poverty rate of 1.7 percent but no significant net change in the transient poverty rate. As described above, however, this change in the chronic poverty rate is due to both individuals shifting from chronic poverty to nonpoor status and from chronic poverty to transient poverty. Examining each of these underlying shifts separately (shown in table 3; also see the appendix, available online, for a graphic representation) shows that adding refundable tax credits to resources moves 1.9 percent of individuals out of transient poverty into nonpoor status, while shifting 1.7 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to transient poverty. A negligible share of individuals is lifted from chronic poverty to nonpoor status when tax credits alone are added to market income resources.

Next, the influence of social insurance is examined, after accounting for the poverty reduction associated with tax credits. Adding social insurance to market income, after adding refundable tax credits, results in significant further net reductions in both the transient poverty rate (3.1 percent) and the chronic poverty rate (6.0 percent; shown in table 2). Again examining the underlying poverty shifts separately (table 3), the additional inclusion of

TABLE 3. Percent of Population with Shift in Longitudinal Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Status, 1998–2008 (with Biennial Data), When Different Types of Government Benefits Are Added Sequentially to Resources

	Percent of Individuals Who Shift Status When Government Benefits Are Added Sequentially to Market Income Resources		
	Chronic Poor → Nonpoor (%)	Chronic Poor → Transient Poor (%)	Transient Poor → Nonpoor (%)
Adding refundable tax credits (vs. market income only)	.1	1.7	1.9
Adding social insurance (vs. market income plus tax credits only)	2.3	3.6	6.7
Adding public assistance (vs. market income plus tax credits and social insurance only)	.5	2.6	3.2

social insurance shifts 2.3 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to nonpoor status, 6.7 percent of individuals from transient poverty to nonpoor status, and 3.6 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to transient poverty. These results are mostly due to the influence of Social Security.

Finally, the role of public assistance is considered, after accounting for the poverty reduction associated with tax credits and social insurance. The additional inclusion of public assistance benefits in resources is associated with a significant additional net reduction in the chronic poverty rate of 3.0 percent and a nonsignificant additional net reduction in the transient poverty rate of 0.7 percent (see table 2). Considering the underlying shifts in poverty status separately (table 3), additionally including public assistance shifts half a percent of individuals from chronic poverty to nonpoverty, 3.2 percent of individuals from transient poverty to nonpoor status, and 2.6 percent of individuals from chronic poverty to transient poverty.

Overall, then, all three types of government benefits, considered sequentially, are associated with lifting individuals out of transient poverty and out of chronic poverty when these poverty shifts are examined separately. All three types of benefits are associated with significant marginal net reductions in chronic poverty. Only social insurance (after adding tax credits) is associated with a substantial net reduction in transient poverty, after accounting for individuals shifting from chronic poverty into transient poverty. For both tax credits and public assistance (after adding tax credits and social insurance), the share of individuals shifting from transient poverty to nonpoverty is similar to the share shifting from chronic to transient poverty, resulting in only nonsignificant net changes in the transient poverty rate. Only social insurance lifts a substantial share of individuals from chronic poverty directly to nonpoor status. Figure 3 shows the cumulative net reductions in longitudinal poverty rates associated with the three types of government benefits.

In terms of individual government benefit programs, some specific programs appear to have different effects on transient and chronic poverty rates, as shown in table 2. To some extent, these differences reflect differences in the types of policies expected to be effective in addressing each type of poverty. For example, unemployment insurance provides the type of short-term income insurance that would be expected to be effective in addressing transient poverty, and in fact the inclusion of unemployment insurance in resources (after including refundable tax credits) is associated with a greater reduction in transient poverty than chronic poverty.

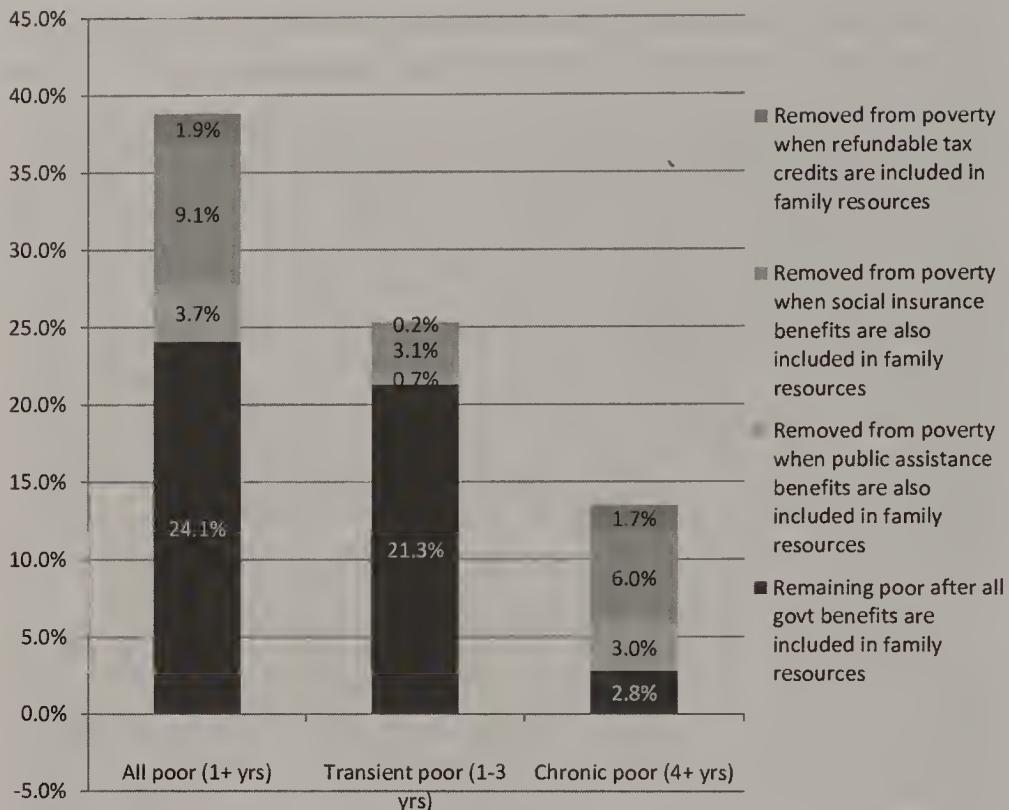


FIGURE 3. Longitudinal Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) poverty rates with and without government benefits, 1998–2008 (biennial data). Source: Author's calculations from PSID data.

On the other hand, housing subsidies and SSI provide the type of ongoing long-term support that would be expected to reduce chronic poverty, and inclusion of these programs is associated with a greater reduction in the chronic poverty rate than the transient poverty rate (indeed, these programs are actually associated with increases in the transient poverty rate, due to more chronic poor individuals shifting into transient poverty than transient poor individuals shifting out of poverty). It is important to note, however, that both housing subsidies and SSI have nontrivial work disincentive effects (Ben-Shalom et al. 2011), and thus the increase in poverty in the true absence of these programs would be expected to be smaller than the counterfactual rate calculated here. Work disincentive effects for these programs are smallest, however, for recipients with the lowest pretransfer incomes (Ben-Shalom et al. 2011), who are more likely to be chronically poor. Thus, the estimated effects of these programs on chronic poverty (where they are associated with the larger poverty reduction) may be less likely to be upwardly biased.

The addition of federal and state EITC to market income resources is associated with a substantial net reduction in chronic poverty. As the EITC is only available to individuals with paid legal employment, this finding suggests that there is a population of working households for whom the EITC is an important ongoing income supplement shielding them from chronic poverty. Without the EITC, these households would likely fall below the poverty line most of the time despite the fact that they are working.¹⁵

Cash welfare for families (TANF) appears to have no additional measurable influence on the rate of transient or chronic poverty after including tax credits and social insurance in family resources. There are two possible explanations for this lack of visible effect. First, some individuals receiving TANF may be lifted out of poverty by tax credits and social insurance so that TANF has no additional effect. Second, because TANF benefit amounts are relatively small and income eligibility cutoffs are low, some recipients may remain below the poverty threshold even after adding TANF to family resources and thus would see no change in poverty status.

The inclusion of Social Security (here represented as old age, survivors', and disability benefits combined) is associated with a very substantial reduction in both transient and chronic poverty rates, with the greatest reduction in the rate of chronic poverty.¹⁶ This result parallels findings from prior research on annual poverty using the SPM, which has similarly found Social Security to be the government program with the largest influence on the SPM annual poverty rate (Short 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2014).

DIFFERENCES BY DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS

Different demographic subgroups have very different rates of transient and chronic SPM poverty before and after including government benefits in resources, and they show distinctive patterns of marginal reductions in poverty associated with tax credits, social insurance (after including tax

15. Note that the EITC is associated with a decrease in chronic poverty both when added to market income alone and when added to market income plus social insurance and public assistance benefits. It is also relevant to consider the antipoverty influence of the EITC in the context of tax policy as a whole, i.e., the combined influence of tax credits and tax liabilities on poverty rates, which is discussed below.

16. Social Security old age, survivors, and disability benefits are not reported separately in the PSID.

credits), and public assistance (after including tax credits and social insurance [see tables 4 and 5; also see the appendix for a graphic representation of cumulative poverty reduction from the three types of government benefits for different subgroups]). Individuals in senior households stand out for their extremely high chronic poverty rate with market income only and for the uniquely large role of social insurance (i.e., Social Security retirement and survivors' benefits) in reducing calculated rates of both transient and especially chronic poverty. Tax credits shift some of these individuals out of chronic poverty (primarily those living with children), but social insurance benefits (after accounting for tax credits) are associated with an extremely large 20.5 percentage point reduction in chronic poverty and a large 6.9 percentage point reduction in transient poverty. Public assistance benefits (after accounting for tax credits and social insurance) are associated with an additional modest reduction in chronic poverty for individuals in senior households.

Individuals in households with children, in contrast, show a substantial reduction in chronic poverty associated with tax credits, a modest additional reduction in transient and chronic poverty attributable to social insurance (after including tax credits), and a larger reduction in chronic poverty associated with public assistance benefits (after accounting for tax credits and social insurance). These patterns are amplified for individuals in single-parent households, who have substantially higher-than-average baseline poverty rates with market income only. Tax credits and social insurance (after accounting for tax credits) have the dominant effect of shifting individuals from chronic to transient poverty for this population (seen in the increased transient poverty rates and decreased chronic poverty rates when these benefits are added to market income). For these individuals, public assistance (after accounting for tax credits and social insurance) is associated with substantially larger reductions in both transient and chronic poverty than for individuals in non-single-parent families with children. After including all government benefits in resources, individuals in single-parent households have a low chronic poverty rate of only 1.7 percent (vs. 2.4 percent for individuals in non-single-parent families with children), but they still have a high transient poverty rate of 38.4 percent (vs. 16.1 percent for individuals in non-single-parent families with children).

Individuals in households with black household heads also have very high market-income-only transient and especially chronic poverty rates. Government benefits are largely associated with reducing chronic poverty

TABLE 4. Effect of Adding Government Benefits to Market Income on Transient and Chronic Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Rates, 1998–2008 (with Biennial Data), for Subgroups

	Individuals in Households with Seniors in 1 or More Years (n = 1,995)	
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	31.3 (1.5) [28.4, 34.4]	26.8 (1.5) [23.8, 29.9]
Percentage point difference in poverty rate after adding refundable tax credits	.4 ^a	−1.4*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	−6.9*	−20.5*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	−.3	−2.0*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	−6.8*	−23.9*
Full SPM poverty rate	24.5 (1.5) [21.6, 27.5]	2.9 −(.5) [2.0, 4.1]
	Individuals in Households with Children in 1 or More Years (n = 7,753)	
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	24.3 (1.2) [22.0, 26.7]	11.6 (1.1) [9.5, 14.1]
Adding refundable tax credits	−.2	−2.7*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	−1.8*	−2.1*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	−.9	−4.0*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	−2.9*	−8.8*
Full SPM poverty rate	21.4 (1.1) [19.3, 23.5]	2.8 (.5) [1.9, 4.1]
	Individuals in Households with Children and a Single Parent in 1 More Years (n = 697)	
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	39.0 (3.3) [32.6, 45.8]	16.6 (2.7) [11.8, 22.9]
Adding refundable tax credits	1.9 ^a	−4.4*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	.4 ^a	−5.8*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	−2.9	−4.7*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	−.6	−14.9*
Full SPM poverty rate	38.4 (3.1) [32.4, 44.9]	1.7 (.5) [.9, 3.1]

TABLE 4 (continued)

Individuals in Households with Children in 1 or More Years but No Single Parent (n = 5,258)		
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	20.5 (1.1) [18.5, 22.7]	7.7 (1.0) [5.9, 10.0]
Adding refundable tax credits	−5	−1.8*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	−2.0*	−1.8*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	−1.9*	−1.7*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	−4.4* 16.1 (.9) [14.4, 18.0]	−5.3* 2.4 (.6) [1.5, 4.0]
Individuals in Households with Black Head (n = 3,542)		
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	31.8 (2.5) [27.1, 37.0]	30.9 (2.7) [25.7, 36.6]
Adding refundable tax credits	2.1 ^a	−4.7*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	1.8 ^a	−10.2*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	.6 ^a	−10.2*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	4.5 ^a 36.3 (2.2) [31.9, 40.8]	−25.1* 5.8 (.9) [4.2, 7.9]
Individuals in Households with Hispanic Head (n = 743)		
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	35.3 (2.8) [29.9, 41.2]	28.7 (4.8) [20.0, 39.2]
Adding refundable tax credits	.8 ^a	−5.1*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	−.5	−2.5*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	−.4	−8.3*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	−.1	−15.9*
Full SPM poverty rate	35.2 (3.2) [29.0, 41.9]	12.8 (3.6) [7.0, 22.0]

TABLE 4 (continued)

Individuals in Households with White Head (n = 5,470)		
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	23.1 (1.0) [21.1, 25.2]	9.1 (.6) [8.0, 10.4]
Adding refundable tax credits	-.6	-1.0*
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	-4.3*	-5.7*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	-1.1*	-1.2*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	-6.0*	-7.9*
Full SPM poverty rate	17.1 (.7) [15.7, 18.7]	1.2 (.2) [.9, 1.7]
Individuals in Households with Other Race/Ethnicity Head (n = 386)		
	Transient Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]	Chronic Poverty Rate (SE) [95% CI]
SPM with market income only	25.9 (4.0) [18.8, 34.6]	11.8 (2.5) [7.6, 17.9]
Adding refundable tax credits	-1.4	-.7
Adding social insurance (after adding refundable tax credits)	-2.3	-4.0*
Adding public assistance (after adding refundable tax credits and social insurance)	2.4	-5.3*
Difference versus SPM with all government benefits (full SPM)	-1.3	-10.0*
Full SPM poverty rate	24.6 (3.7) [18.0, 32.7]	1.8 (.5) [1.0, 3.1]

* $p < .05$.

a Net increase in transient poverty due to individuals shifting from chronic to transient poverty.

for this subgroup, with the net effect of including tax credits, social insurance (after tax credits), and public assistance (after tax credits and social insurance) being to shift individuals from chronic poverty to transient poverty. Individuals in households with Hispanic heads also have high market-income-only poverty rates and see a large share of individuals shifting from chronic to transient poverty when government benefits are included in resources. Individuals in Hispanic households see less poverty reduction associated with government benefits (especially from social insurance) compared to those in black households, leaving them with a substantially higher chronic poverty rate after all government benefits are included in resources. Individuals in white households stand out for their relatively low rates of transient and chronic poverty both before and after including

TABLE 5. Percent of Population with Shift in Longitudinal Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Status, 1998–2008 (with Biennial Data), when Government Benefits Are Included in Resources, for Subgroups

	Percent of Individuals Who Shift Status When All Government Benefits Are Added to Market Income Resources		
	Chronic Poor → Nonpoor (%)	Chronic Poor → Transient Poor (%)	Transient Poor → Nonpoor (%)
In household with senior in 1 or more years	11.5	12.4	19.3
In household with child in 1 or more years	2.4	6.4	9.3
In household with child and single parent in 1 or more years	1.9	13.0	13.6
In household with child in 1 or more years without single parent in any years	2.2	3.1	7.5
In household with black head in first year	8.4	16.7	12.3
In household with Hispanic head in first year	4.5	11.4	11.5
In household with white head in first year	3.3	4.6	10.5
In household with other race/ethnicity head in first year	2.9	7.1	8.4

government benefits and a relatively larger marginal poverty reduction role for social insurance relative to tax credits or public assistance.

INFLUENCE OF TAXES PAID ON CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT SPM POVERTY RATES

Federal and state taxes paid are associated with increases in SPM chronic and transient poverty rates, primarily for transient poverty. For the overall sample, the subtraction of federal and state income taxes (before tax credits) from resources results in a small change in transient SPM poverty rates, but the largest change derives from federal payroll taxes (or FICA; table 6). Payroll taxes are associated with an increase in the overall transient poverty rate of an estimated 1.2 percentage points. This finding parallels results of prior research on SPM annual poverty, which finds that FICA was the tax with the largest influence on the annual SPM poverty rate (Short 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2014).

Further analysis of poverty rates with taxes excluded for the transient poor and chronic poor subsamples only shows that the dominant effect of subtracting taxes is to shift nonpoor individuals into transient poverty. The small effect of taxes on chronic poverty is due to a small proportion of individuals shifting from transient to chronic poverty (see the appendix for details).

TABLE 6. Transient and Chronic Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Rates, 1998–2008 (with Biennial Data), without and with Taxes and Medical Out-of-Pocket Expenses (n = 10,210)

	Transient Poverty			Chronic Poverty		
	Transient Poverty Rate	SE (95%CI)	Percentage Point Difference in Rate	Chronic Poverty Rate	SE (95%CI)	Percentage Point Difference in Rate
Full SPM (all expenses subtracted from resources)	21.3	(.8) [19.7, 22.9]		2.8	(.4) [2.1, 3.7]	
Excluding expense subtractions:						
Taxes:						
Federal payroll tax (FICA)	20.1	(.8) [18.6, 21.6]	Difference in rate (vs. full SPM): -1.2*	2.3	(.3) [1.7, 3.0]	Difference in rate (vs. full SPM): -.5*
Federal and state income tax before credits	20.4	(.8) [18.9, 22.0]	-.9*	2.5	(.4) [1.8, 3.3]	-.3*
All income and payroll taxes	19.1	(.7) [17.7, 20.6]	-2.2*	2.1	(.3) [1.6, 2.7]	-.7*
Net income and payroll taxes after income tax credits	21.3	(.8) [19.7, 23.0]	.0	2.9	(.4) [2.3, 3.8]	.1
Medical out-of-pocket expenses (MOOP):						
Health insurance premiums	19.0	(.9) [17.3, 20.8]	Difference in rate (vs. full SPM): -2.3*	2.6	(.4) [1.9, 3.5]	Difference in rate (vs. full SPM): -.2*
Nursing home and hospital	20.3	(.8) [18.7, 21.9]	-1.0*	2.6	(.4) [2.0, 3.5]	-.2*
Doctor, outpatient surgery, and dental	20.4	(.8) [18.9, 22.0]	-.9*	2.7	(.4) [2.0, 3.6]	-.1*
Prescriptions, in-home medical care, special facilities, and other services	20.5	(.8) [18.9, 22.1]	-.8*	2.6	(.4) [2.0, 3.5]	-.2*
All MOOP	16.6	(.8) [15.0, 18.4]	-4.7*	2.4	(.4) [1.7, 3.2]	-.4*

* p < .05.

It is also relevant, however, to examine the net changes in poverty rates associated with tax policy. The EITC and other refundable tax credits for low-income households can be conceptualized as intended offsets to payroll and income tax liabilities, so it is informative to consider income and payroll tax liabilities net of these tax credits. When net income and payroll taxes are excluded from resources (i.e., federal and state income tax credits minus federal and state income tax liabilities and federal payroll tax liabilities), the increase in poverty rates disappears; the transient poverty rate for the overall sample is unchanged when net taxes are removed from resources, and the chronic poverty rate increases by only 0.1 percentage point, a nonsignificant change. In fact, for several demographic subgroups including individuals in households with children and individuals in black and Hispanic households, the net effect of tax policy appears to be a slight reduction in transient and chronic poverty rates (due to total tax credits larger than total income tax liabilities plus payroll tax liabilities), though these associated changes in poverty rates are generally not significantly different from 0. Thus, refundable tax credits including the EITC and ACTC can be viewed as neutralizing the poverty-increasing effects of income and payroll taxes.

INFLUENCE OF MEDICAL EXPENSES ON CHRONIC AND TRANSIENT SPM POVERTY RATES

Out-of-pocket medical costs are affected by recent changes in federal policy via the recently passed Affordable Care Act (ACA), and thus it is relevant to examine the changes in chronic and transient SPM poverty rates associated with medical expenses during a time frame before the implementation of the ACA. Medical expenses are also one of the more controversial aspects of the design of the SPM (Meyer and Sullivan 2012; Korenman and Remler 2013), which is another reason to explore their influence here.

The subtraction of total medical out-of-pocket expenses (MOOP) from family resources has a noteworthy influence on transient poverty rates, in particular, for the overall sample. In fact, for transient poverty, MOOP essentially counteracts the effect of all government benefits combined, since subtracting total MOOP from family resources raises the transient poverty rate by an estimated 4.7 percentage points, while including government benefits lowers the rate by 4.0 percentage points (table 6). These results parallel the findings from prior research on annual SPM poverty, showing that MOOP is the expense with the largest influence on SPM annual poverty

rates (Short 2011a, 2012, 2013, 2014). The change in the chronic poverty rate associated with medical expenditures is much smaller.

Further analysis of poverty rates with all MOOP excluded for the transient poor and chronic poor subsamples only shows that the dominant effect of medical expenses is to shift nonpoor individuals into transient poverty. The effect of MOOP on chronic poverty is due to a very small proportion of individuals shifting from transient to chronic poverty (see the appendix for details).¹⁷

In terms of the different components of medical spending, for the overall sample, premiums are associated with the largest change in the transient poverty rate (2.3 percentage points), followed by nursing home and hospital payments (1.0 percentage point), doctor, outpatient surgery, and dental expenses (0.9 percentage point), and expenses for prescriptions, in-home medical care, special facilities, and other services (0.8 percentage point). The four components are all associated with similar small changes in the chronic poverty rate for the overall sample, at 0.1–0.2 percentage point for each (table 6).

Another approach to examining these expenses is to first consider the effect on poverty rates of excluding premium expenditures from the calculation of poverty status and then the additional effect of excluding all other medical out-of-pocket expenditures combined. Calculated in this way, for the overall sample, premiums and nonpremium expenses are associated with similar poverty rate changes for both transient poverty (2.3–2.4 percentage points) and chronic poverty (0.2 percentage points each; see table 7).

The contribution of medical expenses to poverty rates varies substantially by demographic subgroup, however, as shown in table 7. Individuals in senior households show by far the largest changes in poverty rates when MOOP is excluded, with an 8.0 percentage point increase in transient poverty and a 1.0 percentage point increase in chronic poverty. For these individuals, nonpremium expenses are associated with a larger change in poverty rate than premium expenses, for both transient and chronic poverty. For other subgroups examined (individuals in households with children, as well as race/ethnic subgroups), premiums are generally associated with a larger change in transient poverty than nonpremium expenses, and the reverse is

17. To be sure that these results when excluding MOOP are not an artifact of the method of imputing MOOP, all analyses were repeated using the subsample of individuals with no imputed MOOP. The pattern of results is substantially the same, with a much larger associated change in transient than chronic poverty and a strongly dominant effect of shifting nonpoor individuals into transient poverty.

TABLE 7. Effect of Excluding Medical Out-of-Pocket (MOOP) Expenses on Transient and Chronic Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) Poverty Rates, 1998–2008 (with Biennial Data), for Overall Population and Subgroups

	Transient Poverty	Chronic Poverty
Full population (<i>n</i> = 10,210):		
SPM poverty rate with all components (SE) [95% CI]	21.3 (.8) [19.7, 22.9]	2.8 (.4) [2.1, 3.7]
Percentage point difference in poverty rate excluding health insurance premiums	-2.3*	-.2*
Additional percentage point difference excluding all other medical out-of-pocket (MOOP) expenses (after excluding premiums)	-2.4*	-.2*
Difference excluding all MOOP	-4.7*	-.4*
Individuals in households with seniors in 1 or more years (<i>n</i> = 1,995):		
SPM poverty rate	24.5 (1.5) [21.6, 27.5]	2.9 (.5) [2.0, 4.1]
Excluding premiums	-3.1*	-.4
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-4.9*	-.6*
Difference excluding all MOOP	-8.0*	-1.0*
Individuals in households with children in 1 or more years (<i>n</i> = 7,753):		
SPM poverty rate	21.4 (1.1) [19.3, 23.5]	2.8 (.5) [1.9, 4.1]
Excluding premiums	-2.1*	-.1
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-1.5*	-.2*
Difference excluding all MOOP	-3.6*	-.3*
Individuals in households with children and a single parent in 1 or more years (<i>n</i> = 697):		
SPM poverty rate	38.4 (3.1) [32.4, 44.9]	1.7 (.5) [.9, 3.1]
Excluding premiums	-3.8*	.0
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-2.1*	-.1
Difference excluding all MOOP	-5.9*	-.1
Individuals in households with children in 1 or more years but no single parent (<i>n</i> = 5,258):		
SPM poverty rate	16.1 (.9) [14.4, 18.0]	2.4 (.6) [1.5, 4.0]
Excluding premiums	-1.7*	-.1
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-1.5*	-.1
Difference excluding all MOOP	-3.2*	-.2*
Individuals in households with a black head (<i>n</i> = 3,542):		
SPM poverty rate	36.3 (2.2) [31.9, 40.8]	5.8 (.9) [4.2, 7.9]
Excluding premiums	-2.9*	-.2
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-1.8*	-.7*
Difference excluding all MOOP	-4.7*	-.9*

TABLE 7 (continued)

	Transient Poverty	Chronic Poverty
Individuals in households with Hispanic head (<i>n</i> = 743):		
SPM poverty rate	35.2 (3.2) [29.0, 41.9]	12.8 (3.6) [7.0, 22.0]
Excluding premiums	-1.1*	.0
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-1.0	-.5
Difference excluding all MOOP	-2.1*	-.5
Individuals in households with white head (<i>n</i> = 5,470)		
SPM poverty rate	17.1 (.7) [15.7, 18.7]	1.2 (.2) [.9, 1.7]
Excluding premiums	-2.2*	-.2*
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-2.7*	-.1*
Difference excluding all MOOP	-4.9*	-.3*
Individuals in households with other race/ethnicity head (<i>n</i> = 386):		
SPM poverty rate	24.6 (3.7) [18.0, 32.7]	1.8 (.5) [1.0, 3.1]
Excluding premiums	-4.2*	.0
Excluding all other MOOP (after excluding premiums)	-1.8	.0
Difference excluding all MOOP	-6.0*	.0

* $p < .05$.

true for chronic poverty (though all associated changes in chronic poverty are quite small). These patterns likely reflect the fact that seniors are more likely to experience health problems requiring additional out-of-pocket expenditures, while premiums alone are often the largest health care expense for younger individuals who are more likely to be in good health. These findings parallel the results from decomposition of annual SPM poverty rates, which show that higher annual SPM poverty rates for seniors, relative to official poverty rates for seniors, are largely driven by seniors' high out-of-pocket medical expenses (Bridges and Gesumaria 2013).

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study makes several contributions to the existing research on poverty in the United States and particularly the influence of social welfare policies on poverty. By examining poverty longitudinally over a time frame that is representative of the current post-welfare reform policy context, this study presents a more up-to-date picture of chronic and transient poverty and the influence of government transfers and taxes on these two types of poverty than is available in prior research.

This study is also one of the first to examine the persistence of poverty in the United States using the SPM rather than the official poverty measure used in prior research on poverty persistence. Use of the SPM makes it possible for this study to examine the longitudinal influence of diverse government policies and benefits on rates of chronic and transient poverty more systematically, and facilitates comparison of these results to other poverty research using the SPM. This study shows, for example, that the large effects of Social Security and medical out-of-pocket expenses on annual SPM poverty rates among seniors, as found in prior research, are actually linked to different types of longitudinal SPM poverty, with medical out-of-pocket expenses associated most strongly with an increase in transient senior poverty, while Social Security is associated most strongly with a decrease in chronic senior poverty.

This study finds that including government benefits in family resources overall is associated with an important reduction in the transient SPM poverty rate and especially in the chronic SPM poverty rate during the 11-year post-welfare reform study time frame. Indeed, considering market income only, with all government benefits excluded from family resources, nearly 40 percent of individuals would be classified as poor in 1 or more years of the 6 years examined. Refundable tax credits, social insurance programs, and public assistance benefits, considered sequentially, are all associated with substantial marginal reductions in longitudinal poverty. Adding tax credits to market income results in a net reduction in chronic poverty, particularly for individuals in single-parent households. Also adding social insurance results in an additional net reduction in chronic poverty as well as a net reduction in transient poverty, particularly for individuals in senior households. Finally, adding public assistance benefits, after including tax credits and social insurance, leads to a further net reduction in chronic poverty, particularly among more disadvantaged demographic subgroups.

Government assistance reduces the calculated rate of transient poverty by more than one-sixth and the chronic poverty rate by nearly four-fifths. The greater absolute and relative change in chronic poverty partly reflects an observed effect of government benefits in this study, which is to increase household resources just enough in some cases to shift individuals out of chronic poverty into transient poverty, thus reducing the chronic poverty rate while simultaneously increasing the transient poverty rate. Indeed both refundable tax credits and public assistance (after accounting for tax credits and social insurance) move similar shares of people up and out of transient

poverty and from chronic to transient poverty. This phenomenon is particularly apparent for individuals in single-parent and minority households. Only social insurance (primarily Social Security, after tax credits) lifts a substantial share of individuals from chronic poverty directly to nonpoor status. To some extent, this result reflects the structure of means-tested government programs in the United States, which typically provide fairly modest benefit amounts that phase out at cash incomes near the official poverty threshold, and thus may tend to stabilize family resources at a level close to the poverty threshold. Government assistance may therefore provide just enough extra resources so that in a good year, the addition of tax credits, social insurance, or public assistance to earnings will lift families' resources above the SPM poverty threshold, but in a bad year (e.g., when they may have fewer days of work or higher medical expenses) they remain below the threshold.

These results suggest that researchers and policy makers should consider the longitudinal effects of these types of social welfare policies. Is the objective of government transfers to lift individuals out of poverty over the long term? Or is the objective to reduce but not eliminate the effects of poverty by supplementing incomes enough to shield individuals from chronic poverty while leaving them vulnerable to transient poverty? Results from this study suggest that the existing framework of social welfare policy functions in the latter form for a substantial proportion of poor individuals, leaving them poor in some years but not chronically poor. This approach might be justifiable since chronic poverty is associated with substantially worse life outcomes than transient poverty, but it may not represent a deliberate strategy.

It is worth noting as well that even after accounting for a wide range of government programs designed (at least in part) to address poverty, nearly one-quarter of individuals still experience 1 or more years in poverty over the 6 years examined in the 11-year study time frame. Although most of these individuals experience only transient poverty, even short periods in poverty can have strongly detrimental effects. Transient poverty may be particularly detrimental during sensitive developmental periods (Kuh et al. 2003; Lynch and Davey Smith 2005), such as early childhood or the prenatal period, when even short-term poverty may increase the risk of cognitive and developmental deficits that have lifelong consequences (Aber and Bennett 1997; McLoyd 1998; Bradley and Corwyn 2002). In addition, some particularly vulnerable demographic subgroups, notably individuals in black and

Hispanic households and in single-parent households, show extremely high rates of transient poverty (more than a third) and high rates of chronic poverty compared to the population overall (particularly for Hispanic households), suggesting a need for greater safety net support.

Results also suggest that certain government programs may have different effects on transient versus chronic SPM poverty, though for specific programs unmeasured behavioral effects may have an important secondary influence on poverty reduction. Given that prior research and economic theory suggest that the demographics and causes of chronic and transient poverty are different, it makes sense to consider whether particular policies may be more effective in addressing either chronic or transient poverty. For example, long-term housing subsidies specifically targeted to individuals who have disabilities that prevent them from working (and from accessing work-linked tax credits and social insurance benefits) might be expected to be an effective intervention to address chronic poverty. Such a program would provide substantial long-term support to individuals who are likely to experience long-term low incomes, who have limited ability to access other government benefits, and who have limited risk from associated disincentives to work. Long-term housing subsidies targeted to individuals who are capable of supporting themselves through work (when combined with work-linked tax credits and social insurance) and are more likely to experience transient poverty, in contrast, would likely be a less efficient intervention. Further research would be helpful to explore this issue, including research that accounts for behavioral effects of specific programs. Explicitly designing and targeting social welfare policies to address the specific needs of chronically versus transiently poor individuals would likely facilitate more efficient and effective use of government anti-poverty resources.

Among individual programs, Social Security is noteworthy for being associated with a very large reduction in chronic poverty among seniors. Indeed, social insurance programs, of which Social Security is by far the largest, are the only type of government benefits found in this study to lift a substantial share of individuals from chronic poverty directly to nonpoverty. This major role in mitigating chronic SPM poverty should be considered in proposals to reform Social Security benefits and funding. At the same time, seniors may be more likely than other individuals to rely on accumulated assets to meet current needs, and spending down of retirement savings (which may be sustainable, or not) among those who have such savings is not accounted for in the SPM framework. Further research that

considers levels of wealth in conjunction with current income for seniors would be valuable in refining the understanding of the role of Social Security in addressing poverty among seniors.

Exclusion of medical out-of-pocket expenses also has a significant influence on longitudinal poverty rates, primarily for transient poverty and most strongly for seniors. In particular, insurance premium expenses are associated with increased transient poverty for non-senior households, while non-premium expenses play a larger role than premiums for senior households. How these patterns may change in response to policies embodied in the ACA is open to question, as some ACA policies are designed to directly reduce out-of-pocket costs for nonpremium expenses and expand access to subsidized health care, other policies are intended to slow the growth of health care costs more generally, and still others require previously uninsured healthy individuals to take on the new expense of insurance premiums within a complex subsidy structure. The fact that medical expenses are most strongly associated with poverty among individuals in senior households suggests that Medicare reform may be the policy arena most likely to produce reductions in poverty linked to medical expenditures. As noted above, however, the simple subtraction of out-of-pocket medical expenses from family resources is one of the more controversial aspects of the SPM. Further research exploring the influence of medical expenses on chronic and transient poverty under alternative approaches to accounting for medical needs would be valuable.

This study has limitations as well. The relatively small sample size leads to relatively large confidence intervals for many analyses, limiting the ability to precisely identify the effect of including specific resources and excluding expenses on calculated poverty rates. Comparing these results to those from a similar analysis in another larger data set would thus be helpful. The SIPP is a larger national longitudinal data set that includes all of the variables required to calculate the SPM, but it has a shorter time frame of only 3–5 years, which is not ideal for examining transient versus chronic poverty compared to the decade-plus period examined in this study.¹⁸ The National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY) also includes the variables required to calculate SPM status, but its sample is limited to specific age cohorts.

18. Research at the Census Bureau is ongoing to construct the SPM in the SIPP (Short and Garner 2012; Short and Giefer 2013).

Another limitation of this study, as noted earlier, is that the calculated counterfactual poverty rates with specific government benefits and taxes excluded do not account for behavioral responses to these programs and policies. Elimination of the EITC, for example, would also cause some individuals (particularly single parents) to choose not to work due to reduced payoff from employment—though others (married individuals) would be expected to show the opposite response (Grogger 2003; Hoynes and Patel 2015)—and thus the change in poverty rate calculated by simply excluding the EITC from family resources is somewhat different from the true counterfactual rate if the program did not exist. Similarly, elimination of SSI would be expected to push more disabled individuals into the workforce (Kaushal 2010), thus diminishing the increase in poverty calculated by excluding SSI from household income. While acknowledging this limitation, the literature on behavioral effects of means-tested programs shows that, for most programs, associated behavioral effects have quite a small net effect compared to the magnitude of the direct reduction in poverty. Of the programs considered here, SSI and housing subsidies have the most consequential documented work disincentive effects relative to their direct poverty reduction based on available research evidence. Furthermore, when government programs are considered in aggregate, as they are here when calculating the effect of all government transfers combined on poverty rates, behavioral effects have been shown to alter overall poverty reduction very little (Danziger, Haveman, and Plotnick 1981; Moffitt 1992; Ben-Shalom et al. 2011).

A final limitation worth mentioning is that this study does not adjust the reported participation or amounts of government benefits for underreporting. Government transfers are often underreported in survey data. Reporting rates in the PSID are better than some other national data sets, but they still fall short of totals in administrative data (Meyer et al. 2015a, 2015b). Adjusting benefits in the PSID is challenging due to the lack of publicly available national administrative data on longitudinal benefits use, but exploring strategies to correct for underreporting would be a valuable area for further research. Relying on reported government benefits may lead to understating the reduction in measured chronic and transient poverty rates attributable to government support.¹⁹ The conservative effect of underreported benefits

19. Underreporting of benefits also leads to overstatement of the number of individuals in poverty, particularly deep poverty (Meyer and Mittag 2015; Meyer et al. 2015b). However, the deep poor are likely to be correctly categorized as “poor” with or without measurement error

may be partly counterbalanced by the overstatement of poverty reduction from ignoring the disincentives to work inherent in some of the government programs considered (particularly housing subsidies and SSI). On the other hand, behavioral effects of other programs considered, such as the EITC (which affects a larger number of individuals), work in the other direction. On net, therefore, it seems likely that results of this study understate the true effects of government support in reducing measured chronic and transient poverty rates.

Overall, this study suggests that there is value in examining the influence of social welfare policies on poverty from more than just a cross-sectional perspective. By examining chronic and transient poverty separately, this study shows that the inclusion of specific government transfers in family resources and the overall package of government benefits are associated with different changes in short-term and long-term poverty rates in the United States. This finding is significant given that transient and chronic poverty are associated with different prevalence, different levels of adverse outcomes, and somewhat different populations. Further consideration of longitudinal effects would be valuable in future research and design of social welfare policies intended to address the problem of poverty.

NOTE

Sara Kimberlin is currently a postdoctoral scholar at the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. She received her PhD in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research interests include alternative approaches to conceptualizing and measuring poverty and the effects and effectiveness of antipoverty policies and programs. She would like to thank Luke Shaefer and Jiyo Kim at the University of Michigan for their contributions to the development of the SPM measure in the PSID used in this study, as well as Thesia Garner at BLS, Jane Waldfogel and colleagues at the Columbia Population Research Center, Charlie Brown at the PSID, and Census and BLS staff for providing data and advice that informed this study. She also thanks the *SSR* reviewers and editors for their insightful critiques and suggestions and Sanders Korenman for helpful comments on an earlier draft. The Horowitz Foundation and Fahs-Beck Fund provided dissertation grants that supported the initial stages of this work. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2013 fall research conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, where many useful comments were received.

from benefits misreporting, as for many of them, the addition of underreported benefits to their very low incomes will not be sufficient to lift them above the poverty threshold (particularly when using the SPM poverty threshold, which is higher on average than the official poverty threshold).

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The Making of Modern Female Workers in Reemployment Programs in Post-Socialist China

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ABSTRACT Using the case of the Good-Heart Elder Home in Hangzhou, this study investigates the cultural meaning of reemployment programs for middle-aged, low-skilled women in contemporary China. The official discourse of the reemployment programs encourages disciplined and competitive workers and requires the women to abandon their habitus as familial home caregivers and formerly uncompetitive laborers under state socialism. The workers, however, embrace their role as skillful home caregivers to defend their autonomy and social values. This conflict is partially reconciled through informal relationships between the manager and the workers even though personal ties in the workplace are a feature of the socialist habitus that both the management and the workers regard as undesirable. Consideration of the mechanisms of habitus change and the ways in which female employees at the elder home resisted them raises questions about how well these reemployment programs fulfill their stated goals.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, China has been undergoing miraculous economic development, with millions of young migrant workers leaving the countryside in order to work in sweatshops. In the twenty-first century, the sustainability of this economic model was called into question. The working population of 18–59-year-olds in China experienced an absolute reduction of 3.45 million people from 2011 to 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2013) due to the declining birth rate. Unlike their parents, this new generation of migrant workers is better assimilated with urban lifestyles and refuses to accept harsh working conditions, causing problems of insufficient manpower in many factories and sectors in Chinese cities (Du 2004).

Middle-aged, low-skilled women caught the attention of social policy makers searching for new sources of labor in contemporary urban China.

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Some of these women used to be factory workers in state-owned enterprises but were laid off (*xia gang*) and replaced by cheaper migrant workers during the post-socialist reforms of economic restructuration and privatization in the 1990s (Appleton et al. 2002). Faced with disadvantages and discrimination in the new job market, many of the women returned to their families and remained unemployed. Meanwhile, the recent massive urbanization projects, based on state confiscation of villagers' farmland, deprived newly urbanized households of their means of production (O'Brien and Li 2006). While the male and younger members of the families might fill undesirable positions in the cities, the middle-aged women often stay at home and are unemployed or underemployed (Davis and Feng 2009).

In order to facilitate these middle-aged women's reentry into the labor market and to fill job vacancies in various sectors, city governments in China funded and organized training and reemployment programs. In collaboration with the Women's Federation, the Department of Civil Affairs, and the Labor Bureau in the cities, these programs assist marginalized women in developing small businesses and gaining employment (Ngai et al. 2012). In Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang Province, courses for job training, entrepreneur skills, and business management are offered in the city governmental buildings, free of charge, to eligible female participants. The Women's Federation of the city also organizes outreach campaigns in different neighborhoods to recruit potential participants who seek full-time employment to supplement their family income but who lack confidence in the current labor market.

At the end of each cycle of training programs, the women are encouraged to submit proposals to start small businesses, and a review committee, mainly consisting of governmental officials in the city, selects a few of them to sponsor in every cycle of the courses. These women-led enterprises receive favorable land-use contracts, tax credits, and, at their early stages, generous assistance from the government to survive in the market economy. In return, they offer job positions to trainees graduating from the courses as well as to other women introduced by the local government who are in need of employment opportunities.

This study explores how these newly established organizations and enterprises, with the assistance of the local state, construct and produce new labor from the older, unskilled, female laborers in this new phase of economic and social reform. Local officials direct the new women-led businesses and female trainees toward industries that are challenged by

labor shortages, such as care services, restaurants, and small-scale manufacturing. (Large mass-production factories refuse to join the programs, as they want a workforce that is young, in good health, and willing to accept intense work schedules and pressure.) Meanwhile, state officials, the program organizers, and even the selected women leaders of the new enterprises view the women entering the program, who have been outdated by the market reforms of China, as unfit for post-reform work ethics and the current employment culture. Besides providing job opportunities, these enterprises are aimed at transforming the left-behind female laborers into disciplined, efficient, professional workers, or in other words, into ideal modern workers who can survive the pace of the new Chinese economy.

The reemployment programs aim not only at achieving economic goals but also intend to internally and culturally change the frames of mind, emotions, and acquired dispositions of the women participants, or, in Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) words, their *habitus*. The people behind the reemployment programs believe that middle-aged, low-skilled women are casual, dependent, familial, and uncompetitive, and the programs are designed to change the women's attitudes and behavior to become professional service workers through training and employment. As *habitus* provides a cultural dimension to the understanding of structural position and its reproduction (Wacquant 2004), the ambition to transform the *habitus* of participants reveals the deep cultural meaning of the reemployment service programs in post-socialist urban China.

There are, in fact, three distinct (and sometimes contradictory) sets of discourses on women's social roles and *habitus* embedded in the design and operation of these reemployment programs. First, the promoted image of modern female workers emphasizes women as productive, independent, and self-disciplined members of the market economy and follows the logic of classic, liberal feminism. It is declared as the official discourse in the reemployment programs for marginalized women, fully embraced and practiced by program organizers, and also partially accepted by the women participants. Second, the idea of appreciating women as family-oriented primary home caregivers, which echoes a certain form of conservatism and some reflective criticism of liberal feminism, is questioned and officially attacked in the programs, but, as this article will show, is prized and used by some women participants to resist the labor transformation and defend their autonomy. Third, a stereotypical version of female laborers under state socialism as casually employed (or having informal and personal social

relationships at their workplaces) and uncompetitive is fiercely deplored by both the program management and participants as a hindrance to the women being integrated into the new Chinese economy. Ironically, in reality, managers and female participants in the programs continue to adopt such social practices to organize labor and provide services.

This article explores how these discourses mix, interweave, and go up against one another in ways that lead to conflicts, negotiation, and compromise in habitus construction for participants in the reemployment programs and that ultimately shape how the reemployment programs transform labor and provide services. This research hopes to uncover the cultural meaning of the reemployment programs in post-socialist China and enrich the scholarly understanding of how well the social and political changes these programs promote fulfill their stated goals and serve those who they are intended to help.

LITERATURE REVIEW

WORKFARE AND CONTROVERSIES

The world has observed two important trends in the organization of welfare and social services since the late twentieth century. First, due to reduced birth rates and a rapidly aging population, many nations now face shortages in their labor supply, particularly in the service sector. Second, under the influence of neoliberalist economics and conservative ideologies, the retrenchment of the welfare state has swept many parts of the globe, and governments have been searching for service models that may replace the bureaucratic state provision and deliver benefits that are more flexible, more varied, and much cheaper (Nicholls 2006). The welfare reforms in China in the 1990s, as elsewhere in the world, also featured budget cuts, decentralization, and compatibility with the growing market economy. From 1979 to 1997, the central budget for social welfare services and social relief shrank from 0.58 percent of GDP (gross domestic product) to 0.19 percent of GDP, despite accelerated economic growth during this period (Shang 2001).

In response to these social changes, popular welfare models, including the social productivist approach (Holliday 2000) and the social enterprise movement (Robinson, Mair, and Hockerts 2009), as well as prominent welfare reform policies, such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) reform in the United States and the New Labour in the United

Kingdom, all put emphasis on pushing welfare recipients into employment, or in other words, onto the change from welfare to workfare. The designers of these reform projects believe that individuals who were formerly marginalized in the labor market and thus left behind by the economy can obtain employment and be integrated into the mainstream society if given adequate training, guidance, and professional help. Such positive outcomes may not only save the state from having to make welfare payments, but may also produce competent workers to increase the labor supply and stimulate economic development.

Some research in the United States suggests that workfare is an economically efficient approach (Moffitt 2002) and that by turning home caregivers into paid caregivers in the labor market, some public good, such as increased income, service availability, and the improvement of workers' self-esteem, might be achieved (Folbre 2001). Still, the reforms come with problems and challenges. When reentering the fiercely competitive labor market, marginalized groups often cluster in jobs that are poorly paid, of low social status, and in unfriendly working environments. Care workers, restaurant workers, and retail service workers are among the classic examples, according to a study by Karen Seccombe (2011) on welfare recipients in the United States. Instead of providing the disadvantaged with a true opportunity to escape from poverty, workfare reforms can subject them to harsh employment conditions and market exploitation.

Many of the workfare projects, such as the TANF reforms, are particularly targeted at home caregivers, who are usually middle-aged women with few marketable skills (Seccombe 2011). They previously received financial support from the welfare system and stayed at home to care for their own family members, but they are now compelled to participate in the labor market, and they very often deliver paid care services to clients. Their family members, meanwhile, are left behind without adequate care. Like the migrant women who provide care in foreign countries yet leave their own children uncared for, the process of the "care drain" (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, 14) also takes place among the participants in workfare projects.

While uncovering such practice consequences of the workfare reforms, recent scholarship also draws attention to the cultural meaning, mechanisms, and outcomes of social policy. As Sharon Hays (2003) argues, inquiries into cultural values that are embedded in welfare reforms can shed light on practical and moral dilemmas created by the policies and on their broader social influence.

HABITUS AND THE CULTURAL MEANING OF WELFARE

Welfare recipients are often culturally stigmatized, in part as an outcome of the old welfare system, which offered financial support to recipients without requiring them to work. Conservative scholars have accused overly generous welfare benefits of promoting laziness, single parenthood, and dependency (Murray 1984). Liberal researchers, on the other hand, debunk the stereotypes of welfare recipients by arguing that issues like single parenthood and dependency among the recipients of welfare and their families are primarily the results of, rather than the causes of, poverty (e.g., Wilson 1987; Edin and Lein 1997). But they also point out that welfare recipients, due to their disadvantaged position, attach specific meaning to life events such as marriage and childbearing and that this cultural perspective is important for understanding their challenges and circumstances (Edin and Kefalas 2005).

Workfare reforms, as an attempt to correct the old welfare systems, not only address economic efficiency and budgetary balance in welfare spending but also carry strong cultural messages to draw marginalized groups back to mainstream values of employment and independence. These policies aim to change the habitus of welfare recipients, who are often perceived as lazy, promiscuous, and dependent, and assist them to become efficient workers in the labor market (Mead 1992). Policy advocates hope that through extensive policy implementation, fundamental value principles and social norms can be established and advocated in order to change the habitus of welfare recipients at the individual level (US Department of Health and Human Services 1999).

The cultural meaning, mechanisms, and consequences of workfare reforms, while promoted by policy makers, are not fully supported with empirical data. In her study of women in poverty in the age of TANF reforms, Hays (2003) demonstrates that two contradictory visions of work and family life, one requiring that women be independent workers and the other expecting women to remain in marriage and provide family care, coexist in the reform contents and construct cultural distortions and political exclusion in policy practice and service delivery. Studies on workfare projects in other social and cultural contexts remain rare.

In the reemployment programs in Hangzhou, the aim to change the habitus of women participants is explicitly stated and enthusiastically practiced in the program's delivery. The repeated, organized, and institutional

emphasis on internal transformation makes the cultural goal of the Chinese reemployment programs even more apparent than that of the TANF reforms in the United States. In the specific context of post-socialist China, the official discourse of the reemployment programs are sometimes at odds with the social roles of the women participants they aim to serve. Considering how the women negotiate conflicts between the official discourse of the program and their own social roles and make compromises in order to mitigate those conflicts sheds some light on how the reemployment programs transform labor and provide services.

METHOD

Hangzhou, the capital city of Zhejiang Province, is located in the affluent Yangtze Delta or Jiang-Nan Area on the east coast of China. The city government of Hangzhou, with its abundant financial resources, prioritizes training and reemployment programs for middle-aged, low-skilled women as part of its welfare development agenda.

Fieldwork for this study began in the summer of 2012,¹ when, through personal connections, we were introduced to seven business organizations in service or care industries that were created as a result of the reemployment programs in the city. After briefly surveying the seven enterprises for two weeks, we purposively sampled (Patton 1990) the Good-Heart Elder Home, which has a longer history and employs the largest labor force, as the main research site. The Good-Heart Elder Home was established and managed by Ding Xili, the wife of an army officer who worked in an army-sponsored factory until it closed in 1999. She participated in the training courses of the city government, and her proposal for an elder care center was selected in 2001. Receiving encouragement and generous help from local officials in land use, construction, client recruitment, and tax returns, she developed the institution into a high-quality elder home in the Hangzhou Area.

The elder home employed 16 women who had been laid off from large state-owned factories in the Hangzhou area, 10 women who were newcomers

1. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the home university of the author, Chinese University of Hong Kong. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used to describe the individuals and institutions in the study. Specific details regarding individuals, families, and events were deleted or modified from the field data.

to the city, and two young, physically disabled women who had just left the state welfare house at the ages of 18 and 19 years old. Except for the two young, physically disabled women, who worked as cleaners at the elder home, all of the other workers were between 39 and 51 years old, had very limited education (primary school and junior high school), and had spouses who worked as manual laborers in various industries. All of the middle-aged service workers had children, and the majority of them (21 out of 26) also cared for their aging parents or in-laws. Since the elder home is conveniently located on one of the city's major roads, the workers could usually manage to commute from home to work by public transportation within half an hour.

Although the middle-aged women workers came from two distinct backgrounds, some as urban, laid-off workers and others as newly urbanized rural residents, they all had stayed out of formal employment for a long period of time and were primary caregivers at home. They found shared life experiences instead of differences in each other, and they often referred to themselves as a whole group of "laggards in the current Chinese society" when joking with one another.

The capacity of the Good-Heart Elder Home was 103 beds, and at the time of the study in 2013, 92 of them were occupied. As a state-initiated institution with a good reputation and high-quality service, the Good-Heart Elder Home mainly attracted urban pensioners and a few retirees from wealthy business households in the nearby countryside. The age of the residents covered a wide range (from 60s to 80s), and their health conditions varied.

With the research assistance of two local university students, I collected ethnographic data at the Good-Heart Elder Home in the summers of 2012 and 2013, using three different methods: intensive participant observation, in-depth interviews, and review of local archives of news coverage, state documents, and meeting minutes.

First, we carried out 7 weeks of intensive participant observation at the elder home. We offered to work at the elder home as entry-level service workers and actively participated in the job and life routines of the women employees. The management assigned a tutor (a senior service worker) to each of us in order to help us adjust to the job routines, and the tutors helped us to enter the world of service workers. The female employees were informed of our research project and were fully aware of our connections with the city government, but seeing (sometimes amused by) our persistent presence at the elder home, they generously shared their

experiences and insights and tolerated our clumsy service practice and curiosity. Many of the women workers declined our interview invitations, saying that they felt they were too uneducated and inarticulate, although the research team tried repeatedly to convince them that such qualities were not required for interviews. The women often seemed to feel more comfortable chatting casually with us instead of sitting down for interviews, and data from such conversations also went into the field notes of participant observation, which were used as the main method of data collection.

Second, we conducted 32 in-depth interviews, each ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours. We started with the key informants and talked with the management team (4 interviews), women workers (11 interviews), elderly clients and their families at the institution (12 interviews), and local governmental officials (4 interviews), as well as a journalist from a local newspaper who was covering the stories of the reemployment of marginalized women in Hangzhou (1 interview). More information about the interviewees can be found in table 1. We collected interview data around specific incidents that we observed during the fieldwork or learned about from the archives. To avoid merely probing abstract concepts that the women might find irrelevant, we encouraged the interviewees to give real-life examples and walk us through their recent experiences at the elder home and in the reemployment programs.

Third, we studied local archives of news coverage, state documents, and meeting minutes at the elder home to understand the contexts of the institution and the reemployment programs of the city and to uncover social interactions to complement the field data. We examined the archives carefully and double-checked their accuracy with the workers, the residents, and local officials during the fieldwork.

Regular meetings of the research team were held to go over and compare field notes, interviews, and archival research, to check the progress of each member of the team, and to discuss the emerging themes in the data that could be tested later during the fieldwork. Data from the different sources were put together and analyzed to generate consistent themes, which could reveal the multiple discourses of the meaning of the training and reemployment programs for marginalized women and the practice mechanisms of labor control, resistance, and reconciliation at the elder home. We aimed to formulate a theoretically meaningful extended case study (Burawoy 1998) through dialogue with existing literature and theories of welfare reforms, the cultural meaning of service programs, and power inequality.

TABLE 1. In-Depth Interviews at the Good-Heart Elder Home

Number	Interviewee	Age	Gender	Education
Management 1	Ding Xili, manger	44	Female	Junior high
Management 2	Ding Xili's secretary	22	Female	College
Management 3	Accountant	37	Female	High school
Management 4	Vice manager	40	Male	Junior high
Worker 1	Auntie Chen	42	Female	Junior high
Worker 2	Auntie Cai	42	Female	Junior high
Worker 3	Auntie Fan	45	Female	Junior high
Worker 4	Xiao Bai, cleaner	19	Female	High school
Worker 5	Sister Chen	39	Female	Primary school
Worker 6	Auntie Xu	46	Female	Primary school
Worker 7	Auntie Wei	43	Female	Primary school
Worker 8	Auntie Wu	45	Female	Junior high
Worker 9	Auntie Shao	43	Female	Primary school
Worker 10	Auntie Jin	40	Female	Primary school
Worker 11	Auntie Wang	51	Female	Junior high
Client 1	Son of resident	56	Male	Some college
Client 2	Grandson of resident	27	Male	College
Client 3	Grandma Mu	71	Female	High school
Client 4	Grandpa Li	67	Male	College
Client 5	Grandma Qi	65	Female	High school
Client 6	Grandpa Zhang	82	Male	Not known
Client 7	Grandma Wang	80	Female	Illiterate
Client 8	Daughter of resident	52	Female	Not known
Client 9	Grandpa Wang	78	Male	Junior high
Client 10	Grandma Mei	75	Female	Primary school
Client 11	Ms. Zhu, daughter	47	Female	College
Client 12	Grandpa Luo	66	Male	College
Official 1	Department of Civil Affairs	51	Male	College
Official 2	Women's Federation	46	Female	College
Official 3	Department of Labor	39	Male	College
Official 4	Department of Civil Affairs	38	Female	College
Journalist 1	Newspaper journalist	28	Female	College

Since we accessed the research site through connections with state officials and the management of the elder home, power dynamics remained an embedded issue of concern for the study, although we made every effort to deflate their effects. Our ethnographic approach helped us to understand the dynamic practices of control and resistance in social interactions at the Good-Heart Elder Home, but our research lacks representativeness and generalizability since it comes from qualitative fieldwork at one site.

RESULTS

THE OFFICIAL DISCOURSE ON THE EFFICIENT AND DISCIPLINED WORKER

In the reemployment programs in China, the local state, instead of social service agencies, plays a vital role in initiating new enterprises, creating job

opportunities, supervising the operations of businesses, and guiding their labor management with official discourses. The Party state, with its everlasting attention to ideologies, anticipates that the reemployment programs will not only regulate the behavior of the workers but also internally transform workers' thoughts and attitudes. In other words, through the reemployment programs, the state intervenes in the lives of the women workers in a way that goes far beyond facilitating their regular participation in the labor market. The reemployment programs ambitiously intend to imbue the marginalized women with market-friendly ideologies and to reconstruct them as independent and competitive modern workers.

The official rhetoric and cultural goal of the reemployment programs targets two stereotypical roles for middle-aged, low-skilled women and aims to overcome both of them in women workers. One is the traditional role of women as housewives and primary home caregivers who are entirely family oriented and possess little aspiration regarding job achievement. The other is the stereotypical role of women as uncompetitive employees who develop casual relationships in the work place and rely on informal networks to complete job tasks—a habitus resulting from their past working experience under state socialism either as workers in state-owned factories or farmers in people's communes. One fundamental goal of the reemployment programs is to replace this outdated habitus of the women with the official ideology of productivity, efficiency, and work ethics and to induce them to enter the mainstream culture of the post-socialist market economy.

In the classroom where middle-aged low-skilled women attend training courses in the city government buildings of Hangzhou, a conspicuous slogan in red Chinese characters on the wall reads: "Suit yourself for the new economy, do not miss the good opportunity again" (*Shiying Xin Jingji, Bie Zai Shi Liangji*). Officials from the Women's Federation of Hangzhou always delivered a speech at the beginning of the training programs for the women, during which they advised the participants that certain features of women in their generation gave rise to their marginalization in the prosperous market economy—namely, being dependent with an out-of-date "iron rice bowl" ideology (or a belief that they should receive job security and employment benefits regardless of how hard they work), prioritizing family over career, having casual and unrefined manners, and lacking aspirations to be competitive. The objectives of the training courses explicitly stated that the trainees were expected not only to acquire new knowledge and skills but also to achieve fundamental internal changes to better fit the new economy.

Ding Xili, the founder of the Good-Heart Elder Home and a particularly successful graduate of the training programs, seemed to embrace this cultural goal and enthusiastically put it into practice. After hiring new female workers at the elder home, she would continue the education they began to receive in the government training programs by compelling her employees to transform from older lower-class women, officially described as “chatty, casual, dependent, and uncompetitive” in program guidelines, to disciplined, professional, and efficient workers. The local government has repeatedly praised and rewarded her for this important contribution to the society as a social entrepreneur.

As a state-initiated reemployment agency, the Good-Heart Elder Home often received visits and inspections from officials and their guests. On such occasions, it was necessary for Ding Xili to demonstrate that the elderly residents were well cared for and, at the same time, that the women employees had changed their cultural habitus and were becoming ideal modern workers. On the occasion of the research team’s first visit to the elder home, accompanied by an official from the city’s Department of Civil Affairs, the women service workers in their uniforms stood in two neat lines at the main entrance to welcome us. They bowed in unison upon seeing us and politely ushered us into the building. During lunch, the workers at our table sat straight-backed and described to us in soft voices the dishes prepared that day for the elderly residents. The city official, who was also a friend of Ding Xili, smiled with pride and said to me, “Can you believe that they used to be those lousy and vulgar older housewives from closed factories or in villages? That is how the government should step in and intervene in society!”

HABITUS CHANGE THROUGH LABOR CONTROL

To facilitate the habitus change of women workers and fulfill the official discourse of the reemployment programs, Ding Xili adopted meticulous and innovative measures of labor control in her management of the Good-Heart Elder Home. The management team of the Good-Heart Elder Home consisted of four individuals: Ding Xili, the manager; a male vice manager; a female accountant; and a secretary in the general office. The other three members of the management team seemed to feel that it was their role to follow Ding Xili’s leadership and put her ideas into action; Ding Xili seemed to be recognized as the sole boss of the organization. She compiled detailed

guidance for the women working at the elder home, which was made available in a printed 72-page handbook and was also displayed in eye-catching posters on the walls of the institution. Her management strategies ranged from reflection sessions to monetary penalties, yet all of them seemed focused on shaping the employees into the ideal disciplined and efficient workers and did not seem to allow much autonomy and flexibility for the women.

Reflection Sessions

“Attitude determines everything” was a popular management slogan at the Good-Heart Elder Home, and Ding Xili cited it almost every day in our period of observation. During job orientation for the newly employed staff in August of 2013, she told her own life story with tremendous emphasis on the moment when she realized how the new economy punished her as an obedient matron worker in her former factory: “I followed the orders of the leaders, joked around on the shop floor with other workers, and sacrificed for my husband and child. But none of that prevented me from being abandoned by the market economy. . . . If you want to change your circumstances, you need to change yourself first. That was the most valuable lesson I learned from that confusing period of suffering in my life,” she emotionally related, with tears in her eyes.

Some experienced employees at the elder home also shared stories about their lives before coming to this institution. Although their delivery seemed less inspiring and they often read from notes, they also concluded that they became completely new people and felt much more in tune with current society after they learned to criticize their imprudent former selves under state socialism and ceased to play the role of unrefined matrons. “I then understood that I must stop chatting with the other staff about my child all the time. That is not professional. I must be attentive to the needs of the elders,” said Auntie Fan,² whose son was diagnosed with a cognitive disorder, receiving enthusiastic applause from the audience. After the talks, Ding Xili invited the new staff members to join the process of reflecting on their past and realigning their positions in the new economy, while she distrib-

2. Female service workers at elder homes in China are usually called “aunties” or “sisters.” They also use these terms to refer to each other.

uted handbooks of service guidance and rules to them. She greeted every one of them with an encouraging and sincere smile.

These kinds of talks and discussion sessions were built into the regular work schedule at the elder home. At the start of a new week of work, all of the staff members were required to attend a short meeting on Monday morning at 7:30 a.m. to remind them of the rules at the institution and to reflect on the unwelcome aspects of their old selves. “Why should we always wear our uniforms to work?” Ding Xili’s young secretary asked the group. A service worker voluntarily answered, “It is to tell us that we are not housewives anymore and cannot simply do things in our casual ways. We now work at a high-end elder home.” Ding Xili, who was sitting at the front with a visiting official from the Women’s Federation of Zhejiang Province, observed this exchange with apparent satisfaction.

The women workers were required to write short reflective essays and submit them to the administrative office within a week of attending the talks. The management team reviewed the essays and selected some pieces to post on the clip boards in the hallway of the elder home. One laid-off factory worker wrote, “After the talk, I started to think how naïve I was at the lock factory. I thought I only needed to follow the orders of the workshop leader, and I spent too much time chatting with the other women and taking care of my family. . . . That left me with no real skills.” A newcomer to the city wrote, “It was stupid of me to believe so much in the village commune. . . . I never tried to develop myself or learn about the outside world. . . . No wonder I could not get a job in the city.”

The weekly talks and required response essays at the Good-Heart Elder Home are reminiscent of the organized sessions of criticism and self-criticism under state socialism in China. At that time, people were eager to demonstrate their loyalty to Chairman Mao and communism, while now their determination is to change habitus and become adjusted to the capitalist market economy. The intended new habitus, ironically, attacks the image of casual and uncompetitive matron workers and farmers under state socialism while also devaluing the family care work of housewives.

Rules Enforcing Professional Behavior

Ding Xili often worried that her women employees could not differentiate institutional elderly care from the family care work that they delivered every day at home. In order to instill professional manners into the women and facilitate their transition into disciplined modern workers for the growing

service sector, Ding Xili created meticulous routines in every aspect of the institution.

Female employees needed to follow specific guidelines in their manners and behavior. They were not allowed to dye their hair, leave their hair untied, wear jewelry, or apply make-up at work. They needed to wear their uniforms in the required colors, modest black pants, and flat black shoes. They were required to maintain personal hygiene by taking daily showers, carefully brushing their teeth after meals, and regularly trimming their nails in order to appear smart and professional. They were forbidden to discuss their family issues or chat with each other for more than 5 minutes during working hours. The handbook described how they should stand, sit, and walk at the elder home to demonstrate desirable posture and how they should address their clients in appropriate terms with a warm smile. The handbook warned, “Stop acting like an ignorant housewife and make the clients accept and like you!”

There was also a large number of rules governing service delivery at the Good-Heart Elder Home. Workers were supposed to roll clothing instead of fold it in the elderly residents’ wardrobes to save space; the three drawers from top to bottom were for underwear, shirts, and pants; and in each drawer, light-colored clothing was supposed to be placed toward the back while dark-colored items were placed at the front. After the elderly residents went to bed, workers needed to place their shoes 25 centimeters apart for females and 30 centimeters apart for males, pointing toward the room door. When feeding the elderly residents, the workers were supposed to put the side of the spoon, not the front of it, inside the mouth first to avoid hurting the tongue. Every client had plastic cups in five colors for different purposes (water, juice, milk, medicine, and other), and they needed to be placed on the shelves in the clients’ rooms in exactly the same order. The key mechanism for service quality assurance at the Good-Heart Elder Home seemed to be precise repetition of these procedures, which did not allow flexibility or innovation. One of the students on the research team commented that the workers were expected to act like robots, and Ding Xili responded that acting like robots is good for them. “These women stayed at home for a very long time and are too free and easy. They did what they felt like doing and thought it would be OK, because their family members did not really complain. They might come here, thinking that they can finish the work easily and then go home. The rules will tell them that it is no longer true! They need to learn to be professional in this economy!”

Penalties for Breaking the Rules

Ding Xili and the local officials often expressed concern about the work ethics of their female employees; they often attributed the employees' casual attitudes and lack of aspiration to their past work experience in state-owned factories or people's communes, as well as to prolonged periods out of the labor market. An official in the city's Department of Civil Affairs said: "Back to the socialist time, in their factories or communes, all they did was to develop networks with their supervisors and colleagues. All the problems could be solved through these informal and sometimes casual ties. No matter whether you really worked or not, you would be fine and there was no big difference. That cannot be continued in this era for them."

In order to encourage the women workers to take their jobs seriously and be responsible, Ding Xili adopted a strict monetary reward and punishment system. Outstanding workers who strictly followed the guidelines and actively transformed themselves to fit into the institution were rewarded with cash bonuses, promotions, and opportunities for continuing education in major Chinese cities and abroad. However, when a mistake occurred, someone was held responsible and a fine of varying amount, depending on the gravity of the mistake, was deducted from that person's monthly salary. Quarreling with someone in public cost 100 RMB,³ receiving a filed complaint from an elderly resident or a resident's family cost 20 RMB, misplacing an elder's shoes after he or she went to bed cost 10 RMB, leaving stains on the cups cost 10 RMB, and being caught using bad manners cost 5 RMB. At the elder home, the average monthly wage was approximately 1,000 RMB for cleaners, 1,500 RMB for junior service workers, and 2,000 RMB for more experienced staff. Hence, mistakes could be expensive. I asked Ding Xili if she ever showed leniency when the workers' financial circumstances were taken into account. "No, never," she replied without any hesitation. "I think it is crucial for one to learn about work responsibility and accept the consequences of one's performance. We cannot always rely on personal ties and favors from managers or co-workers, right? Then we can be independent and useful. They (the workers) did not learn about this in their old jobs or as housewives, but really should learn it now for their own good."

Ding Xili not only authored the policy of penalties at the elder home, she also was a diligent supervisor of its implementation. Accompanied by her management team, she was seen walking round the institution every

3. According to the current exchange rate, 1 USD equals approximately 6 RMB.

morning, giving directions to the employees and chatting with the elderly residents and their families. She carefully observed the workers, and if anything appeared inappropriate, she would approach the employee immediately and, while correcting the employee's behaviors, ask her secretary to take note of the salary deduction for the month. She frequently conducted unexpected inspections of the rooms. She would randomly choose a room to visit and would check on the shelves, drawers, and desks; pull up the mattress to check for odors; and test to see whether there was dust on the window frames. The outcomes of the inspections were closely tied to the performance evaluations of the female workers and the amount of their monthly salary.

WOMEN RESIST THE OFFICIAL DISCOURSE

The reemployment programs are rooted in the belief that women workers are structurally marginalized in the booming economy due to the inappropriate habitus they developed as laborers under state socialism and as housewives and that they can catch up with the social changes in China if they embrace the official discourse and internally transform into disciplined and competitive workers. On the one hand, as generally is the case in the contemporary Chinese society (Whyte 2010), the women workers seemed to agree with the criticism of their work attitudes under state socialism, which is reflected in what they wrote in their essays for the reflection sessions. One woman explicitly stated during an interview, "Working back then (in the factory) was very different. It was not very serious and people focused on developing networks, especially with the leader. . . . Guess we need to re-learn about work now."

On the other hand, the women seemed to reject the official devaluation of their skills of home-care work and their roles as primary family caregivers. In their work practices at the elder home, they defended their autonomy in care delivery, the values of home-care skills, and their life choices regarding family and work by insisting that home-care styles contributed to their service jobs and that their familial orientation was a reasonable and realistic division of labor in their households.

WOMEN PROVIDE HOME-STYLE CARE AT WORK

The middle-aged women workers at the elder home all served as primary caregivers at home. When talking about good care of the elderly, they often

emphasized the importance of safeguarding the agency, autonomy, and control of the caregivers, both at home and in the institutional setting. As junior staff at the Good-Heart Elder Home, another worker advised us, “Do what you can do at the time for the residents. Don’t push the limits and trust yourself—then you are happy and the clients are happy.”

This perception of care of the elderly as realistic, spontaneous, casual, and creative echoes the previous research on family elderly care in contemporary China (Zhan, Feng, and Luo 2008; Li et al. 2012). When reduced family size, mass migration, and increasing female labor participation limit the family’s resources for elderly care, the elderly and their adult children often reach a consensus to organize realistic and flexible plans of care (Li et al. 2012). The elderly parents no longer use the discourses of filial piety to demand care, but they do try to face reality by understanding the dilemmas of their adult children and supporting them in other duties.

The women workers had busy partners and school-age children, and when they worked at the elder home, receiving lunch became a problem for their own aging parents. Some of the women purchased microwave ovens and taught their parents to use them, and others organized meal plans at their neighbors’ homes or small restaurants nearby for their parents. One morning Auntie Huang found that the weather was too warm for her father-in-law to wear full-length pants, but his short pants were still packed away in the back of the closet. As she was in a hurry to go to work, she got out an old pair of pants her son had outgrown, quickly cut them to fit the old man, and asked him to put them on. She shared the story with her colleagues as a funny incident, and the other workers admired her for this smart strategy.

The meticulous routines and rules of service at the Good-Heart Elder Home, which were intended to instill discipline and formalize care work, did not always align with the workers’ definitions of good care of the elderly. The workers did not always believe in the concept of professional care as it was defined at the institution, and they sometimes regarded the rules as well intentioned yet unrealistic plans of the boss. Auntie Wei, a senior service worker, whom Ding Xili often praised, said, “I know she (Ding Xili) means well. But with all those rules, is it still an elder home, or a hospital, or even a prison? . . . If I followed these rules to treat my mother-in-law, she probably would go crazy, or just kill me.”

Behind Ding Xili’s back, the workers brought their own skills and methods of family caregiving to the elder home, even though such behaviors

were regarded as unacceptable in the official discourse of the institution. Sister Chen was feeding an uncooperative client one day and used a fly-swatter as her method of persuasion. “Do you eat or not!” she cried to the elderly man as she sat on his bed and hit his leg with the flyswatter, producing a “pa” sound. Her voice and the touch made the man open his mouth, and she swiftly put a full spoon of food into his mouth. She repeated the cry and then hit again every few seconds until the elderly man finished his meal. “We do this all the time in our family,” she explained to me with a shy smile after the meal. “Elders are like kids, I think. And sometimes it is necessary to frighten them so that they behave.”

Disciplining the elderly residents in casual and unrefined ways was common service practice at the Good-Heart Elder Home, even though it contradicted the official discourse of disciplined and professional care. One male resident at the elder home, who had never married and who had a mental illness, would find every opportunity to harass the female residents. He was separated in his corner room in the morning when Ding Xili often inspected the work of the staff, but after his nap, he would make strange noises until the workers allowed him to leave his room, whereupon he would rush to the rooms of female residents. One summer afternoon in 2012, Auntie Hua noticed that he had broken into the room of two female residents again. She went into the room and pulled him out, cursing. The man started to run away from her, and she chased after him until he went back to his room. They made a lot of noise in the hallway, and many residents gathered at the doors of their rooms to watch the amusing chasing game. They clapped their hands, cheered for Auntie Hua, and burst into laughter. Auntie Hua, after completing her mission, went back to the staff room and commented that she felt as if she were back in her former village home, where women gossiped about everything and enjoyed funny incidents together. She congratulated herself for not only maintaining order at the elder home but also for entertaining her clients.

Although the city officials and the management of the institution categorized a casual and unrefined home-care style as a feature of the women’s undesirable habitus, their clients still seemed to appreciate and welcome such practices. Grandpa Guo, a retired state official, explicitly told us that he chose this elder home because of the service staff. “They are local, speak the Hangzhou dialect, and act in ways that are very familiar. In some other places, all the workers are migrant workers and it does not feel like home. . . .

The manager is too hard on them. It is not necessary to have so many rules. The elders here like them so much—they are just like those middle-aged women in our former neighborhoods.”

When the women workers provided home-style service and the elderly clients reported enjoying it, Ding Xili’s project of habitus change faced a dilemma. The practical goal of client satisfaction often had to outweigh the ambition to transform and reconstruct the female workers. Although Ding Xili ignored the residents’ suggestions and insisted on the implementation of the rules, she often tolerated violations that went on behind her back. In our conversations, she admitted she knew that the workers sometimes behaved in more casual ways, and she never endorsed their practices, but she also never took serious action (such as changing her routine schedule at the elder home) to warn or punish the workers. The workers may have learned to criticize their casual home-care style in discussion sessions and reflective essays, but in everyday service practice, they often comfortably maintained their autonomy and adopted their old manners to resist the official discourse of disciplined professional care style.

WOMEN PRIORITIZED FAMILY DUTIES

Besides developing disciplined and professional manners, the desired habitus, as defined in the management rules, also required that the workers have greater career orientation, economic independence, and competitiveness. In their written reflections, the women agreed that workers with these attributes would better fit the market economy and succeed in contemporary Chinese society. But, in real life, they often seemed to find it unrealistic and even irrational to become ideal modern workers; life circumstances often compelled them to stay in the role of primary home caregivers, who are stereotypically familial and financially dependent.

The workers typically prioritized family needs over their work duties behind Ding Xili’s back. Ding Xili was usually present at the elder home in the mornings, and the workers arrived at work on time. But in the afternoons, when Ding Xili needed to go to meetings and attend to other business, the workers would take turns skipping their shifts or would go home early. They had a lot of legitimate reasons for doing this, such as caring for aging parents, taking sick children to see the doctor, helping with children’s homework, catching the sales at the supermarket, packing for their traveling husbands, and so on. When she was away, Ding Xili would ask

group leaders Auntie Chen and Auntie Wei, the two senior model employees, to supervise the workers, but they never intervened. Auntie Wei said, "We all come from ordinary families. The men need to work very hard to earn money. And we surely need to take care of the elders and the children. Who will do it otherwise? . . . The boss would say we are not independent—maybe true. But we used to depend on inefficient communes and factories. They are not reliable, and we depend on our husbands and then count on our children. What is wrong with that?"

The women workers tended to stay in their traditional roles of family caregivers who often valued their family duties over their work performance. In this quiet resistance to the official discourse of career aspiration and economic independence, the women workers articulated their autonomy in making rational and willing choices in favor of their families. They usually worked out ways to take care of family responsibilities within their own circle of workers in order to avoid direct debate or conflict with the boss. However, on some occasions when the boss overtly objected to their familial choice, women would often still stick to their priorities, although sometimes with some degree of guilt.

Auntie Fan, whose teenage son was diagnosed with a cognitive disorder, was often selected as a role model to speak at the meetings and discussion sessions. At the end of August in 2013, after working at the Good-Heart Elder Home for 5 years, she decided to quit her job in order to accompany her son to study at a special needs school in another city. At the time, Ding Xili was about to promote her to the position of group leader of service workers and increase her salary by 15 percent. She talked to Auntie Fan many times, trying to convince her to stay, but Auntie Fan still submitted her resignation letter on August 21.

I visited Auntie Fan in her small, two-bedroom apartment in a shabby building in an old district of Hangzhou, which was allocated by the textile factory where she formerly worked. She and her husband were both laid off after the factory was privatized in 1996, shortly after they got married. For 3 years, they tried different business plans that failed and delayed having children. Her husband then went back to his former work as a mechanic technician and took contracted jobs in private factories, which required frequent travel. Auntie Fan gave birth to their son in 2000 at the age of 32, and she said she felt that the boy's autism was a result of their bad planning. "I never planned anything right, you know. Now I only want to take care of my son. . . . Yes, I like the job at the elder home and the promotion

would be nice. I also feel very bad for the boss. She values and trusts me so much. But my son needs me to go to the new school. . . . My husband earns more than me and can buy social insurance for my retirement. He goes out to earn the money and I take care of the home—that is the most reasonable way of life for us."

The women employees' resistance to the project of changing habitus and becoming productive and competitive workers concerned Ding Xili, who was aware that the women often prioritized their families over their work behind her back. Since the women workers' prioritization of family duties did not promote the satisfaction of the clients, she criticized this part of their resistance more openly than their casual home-care style manners. She often talked about her disappointment with such behavior at meetings, to reporters, to city officials, and to the research team, but she found it extremely difficult to change the situation.

INFORMAL TIES AND NETWORKS AS MEANS OF RECONCILIATION

The reemployment programs aim to change the habitus of marginalized women in order to make them disciplined, efficient, and competitive workers in the market economy. They attack the idea of women as family-oriented housewives who deliver unprofessional home care, as well as the image of women as uncompetitive and casual laborers under state socialism who rely on personal ties with leaders and colleagues in order to survive. I find that, in practice, the women workers tended to stick to their roles as experienced family caregivers, to defend their autonomy and values, and to express resistance. The cultural antagonism between the official discourse and the workers' understanding of women's social roles, ironically, was partially reconciled through informal ties and networks between the manager and the workers—a feature of the socialist workplace culture that both the management and the workers claimed to disapprove of in the new era of China.

INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MANAGERS AND STAFF

Ding Xili created meticulous and authoritative rules of service routines and penalties in order to convert women into disciplined workers, but to implement the rules, she often took on the role of a caring matron and built close

connections and rapport with her workers. Every time she went on a trip for vacation or business, for example, she brought back personalized gifts for each of the employees: skin care products for the one whose daughter had acne problems, foreign medicines for the one whose mother had serious arthritis, special shoes for the disabled young woman. The women workers accepted these gifts with deep gratitude for her thoughtfulness, and they reported feeling that they in fact “had a close relationship” with their sometimes strict boss.

Ding Xili took an interest in the private lives of the workers, and through advice and suggestions, she conveyed the ideas of independence, responsibility, and competitiveness to them. As a rule, she did not allow the workers to bring their stress and anxieties about their family life to work, but when she observed emerging issues in their private lives, she warmly invited the workers to her office after they completed their shifts and initiated discussions that broke down the work-family boundary. She regularly had heart-to-heart talks with the workers about their family relationships and personal concerns. These interactions cultivated a sense of closeness and intimacy, and they seemed to be an effective method of fostering agreement with her rules and reinforcing her leadership.

The workers said that one of the reasons why they demonstrated compliance with the meticulous rules in the guidebook when Ding Xili was present was because “she is a good employer, a kind person, and a role model, who deserves respect and compliance.” This reason seemed at least as important to them as avoiding deductions in their salaries.

Auntie Jin, a 40-year-old newcomer to the city, was assigned to be my tutor when the research team volunteered to work at the elder home. Her family lost their farmland when the city government decided to build a sports center in her home district in 2003. They received compensation and a new apartment, but she needed to find employment and adjust to the urban way of life. “I went to several job fairs, but was told that I looked stupid—even my husband and son said that,” she said during an interview. She came to work at the elder home in 2011, and she still felt nervous that she could not remember the rules correctly in front of the boss.

One morning, when Ding Xili was walking around the institution, Auntie Jin needed to move a semi-paralyzed elderly resident into a wheelchair in order to take the resident out for a walk. She kept a piece of paper in her pocket, on which she had carefully written the five steps for moving an elderly resident between the bed and the wheelchair. When she was about

to take action, she took the paper out, read it, and recited its contents by heart. I joked that she must really want to avoid fines and keep her salary. She replied, quite seriously, “It is not all about the money—of course, money is important. But I hope to follow the rules of the boss in front of her, and not to disappoint her. She is a very kind person and treats me with care and respect. I don’t often feel that in the city. I can at least try to repay her by letting her see that I am following her rules. . . . No, I don’t understand the five steps, but if she says so, I won’t disagree in front of her.”

Through these informal and personal connections between the manager and the workers, the habitus change and the modern employment culture, which the official discourse of the reemployment programs desired, was acted out at the institution when Ding Xili was present. Ding Xili always accompanied the local officials and visitors when they arrived, and the workers showcased an efficiently organized and well-run institution to make their boss proud. Although Ding Xili was aware that her workers broke the rules behind her back, and she sometimes complained about their behavior to the officials, the Good-Heart Elder Home could at least be presented to the public as achieving some success.

SENSE OF SISTERHOOD AMONG WORKERS

The workers developed close personal relationships, even though the management rules forbade them from chatting or discussing personal affairs at work. “It is because we share the same feeling of ‘laggards’ in the current society, I guess,” Auntie Shao claimed. “We naturally like each other and get along very well. We are sisters, really.” When the boss was not around, they would share personal and family experiences, go shopping together after work, and go on family trips together during holidays.

This sense of sisterhood united the workers when they quietly broke the management rules behind the back of the boss. In an informal rotation system, they took turns leaving work early to take care of family issues in the afternoons. Those who stayed at the institution covered for the ones who left early, so that the service at the elder home would not be disrupted. When women delivered home-style care to their clients, the other workers seemed to fully understand the practices, and no one intervened or reported these unorthodox methods.

When the boss was away for a longer periods of time, the workers, as if with tacit agreement, would collectively ignore the strict service rules and

deliver their own style of service with complete autonomy. During the last week of July in 2013, Ding Xili went to France to receive an award for social service and took a week off to enjoy a vacation in Europe with her family. The day after she left, the women workers, in consensus, wore their normal summer clothes and slippers to work. They reasoned that the uniforms were too warm for the summer and that it was more comfortable to wear slippers than formal black shoes. Auntie Shao brought her daughter, a high school student who was on summer break, to the elder home and asked her to do her homework in the general office. Auntie Jin invited her father, who lived nearby, to have lunch with the elderly clients and workers in the dining room. The workers chatted loudly in the hallway, treated the elderly residents in an extremely casual manner, reduced the frequency of room visits and cleaning, and instead of patrolling the institution during the elders' naptime, they ate ice cream together in the main kitchen.

Perhaps as a result of their sense of sisterhood, the women workers understood each other's needs, helped each other with their service delivery, and collectively switched between two modes of operation at the elder home depending on the presence or absence of Ding Xili with amazing ease and harmony. Although informal and personal ties in the workplace were criticized by the official discourse of the reemployment programs as a feature of undesirable employment culture under state socialism, no one discussed or reflected on the sense of sisterhood among workers at the elder home. Whenever we mentioned the term "socialism" during the fieldwork, both Ding Xili and the workers responded indifferently that it was so "out of date."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Much ink has been spilled over the way in which China's market reforms have marginalized middle-aged low-skilled women. Female laid-off workers and newcomers to the cities constitute an important part of the emerging urban poor in Chinese cities (Solinger 1999). Despite many policy initiatives encouraging women to enter the paid labor force, female labor participation in urban China dropped from 81.55 percent in 1982 to 73.09 percent in 2005 (Li 2010). The statistics are more alarming for middle-aged women (35–49 years old): the level of female unemployment in this group increased by 17 percent, from 2000 to 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2000, 2010). Training and reemployment programs that combine the

goals of increasing the labor supply to sustain economic development and providing marginalized women with work opportunities in accordance with the logic of welfare have mushroomed in major Chinese cities. These state-initiated programs of social service, while claiming to reduce poverty, exclusion, and injustice for the disadvantaged, carry a strong cultural goal to change the habitus of marginalized women and redefine their social role in the contemporary Chinese market economy with the official discourse of disciplined, efficient, and competitive workers.

The official discourse of the reemployment programs urges women workers to overcome their habitus as familial home caregivers and uncompetitive laborers under state socialism and develop new selves in order to catch up with the Chinese market. At the Good-Heart Elder Home, the management, following the guidance of the local government, have adopted reflection sessions, service routinization, and penalization to compel the women workers to question and eventually abandon their old habitus and become ideal modern workers. When the rules of labor control and transformation intruded into and devalued the women's private lives, they used the discourse of women as skillful and important family caregivers to defend their service autonomy and social values. They delivered casual, home-style care at work and prioritized their family duties over career development behind the back of the manager.

The cultural and service practice conflicts at the elder home were partially reconciled through the personal relationships between the members of the management team and the workers, even though informal ties in the workplace are considered features of the undesirable habitus of workers under state socialism. The women workers performed disciplined and professional service according to the official discourse out of their respect and gratitude to the manager when she was around. When she was away, however, they organized and collectively practiced covert resistance to the rules, protected by the network of sisterhood.

The reemployment programs tried to intervene in the private and internal lives of the women workers by imbuing them with capitalist, market-friendly ideologies, yet they also seemed to wind up provoking the workers to defend their autonomy and the value of their roles as family caretakers and to sometimes characterize the official discourse as unrealistic and irrational. There is a gap between the desired professionalism of institutional elderly care in places like the Good-Heart Elder Home and the reality of

the social roles of middle-aged, low-skilled women in China. People view elderly care as casual and unrefined work, and caring for the elderly pays a meager salary and is a low-status job. The gender divisions of labor and social roles in lower-class Chinese families are persistent, and care support from outside the home for these women's families is unavailable. Without reform in these areas, attributing the marginalization of women workers in the market economy to their habitus and requiring them to fundamentally change their views hardly makes sense.

Moreover, to achieve the goal of internal habitus transformation, the official discourse of the reemployment programs attacks the women's role as home caregivers and the work culture under state socialism, and it embraces the pro-capitalist market ideology of efficient and competitive workers. These ideas of modern female workers in the paid labor market to some extent echo the first wave of the liberal feminist movement, which has subsequently been called into question by the later waves in the domain of social justice (e.g., Gerhard 2001). Recent research shows that welfare programs in the United States often operate within a wider ideology of market fundamentalism and pro-capitalism, yet there is little critical reflection on how well this ideology winds up working in social service practice (Chernega 2007). The same is true of China. It is never questioned whether the official discourse of habitus change that informs the reemployment programs achieves true justice for the women who participate in them. Issues such as social support for workers' families and flexible working hours are not mentioned. As a successful entrepreneur, Ding Xili could hire help at home to take care of her parents, and she had a flexible job schedule. The reemployment programs did not seem to consider whether the workers might need these arrangements as well. If the post-socialist reemployment programs hope to promote social equality and fairness, a more critical understanding of gender, class, and the labor market is necessary.

It is still too early to arrive at any definite conclusions about the reemployment programs for marginalized women in China and the general approach of welfare, but it is important to investigate and scrutinize their cultural meanings and operational mechanisms in order to hold them more responsible for the rights of workers and the goal of reducing social inequality. Rather than accepting the influence of market ideologies in welfare projects as a matter of fact, researchers in the social service sector may need to focus more on how justice can be served in these programs.

NOTE

Haijing Dai is an assistant professor of social work at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She received her PhD in social work and sociology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her research examines the organization and mobilization of grassroots institutions in the delivery of localized social welfare programs and how that influences welfare systems, public policies, and social stratification. She also has a particular interest in women's organizations and their roles in social and political change. The South China Research Grant from the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies and the Early Career Scheme of the Research Grant Council of Hong Kong (grant no. 458612) kindly supported the research activities for this study. Ms. Yan Sufen, Ms. Lau Yan Kitty, Mr. Chen Guofeng, Mr. Xie Wei, Ms. Shen Ming, and Ms. Wu Luxia offered generous assistance to this research project.

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The Future of the Family Cap: Fertility Effects 18 Years Post-Implementation

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ABSTRACT Family caps are the one welfare reform explicitly designed to reduce birth rates among poor, unmarried women. These policies generate a great deal of controversy due to the groups of women they target, the mechanisms through which they operate, and the effects they purport to produce. This article presents results from a national study with 18 years of post-family cap data. We find that family caps reduce nonmarital births by about 2 per 1,000 and the nonmarital birth ratio by nearly 2 per 100 and that these effects are confined primarily to states where Medicaid is used to pay for abortion and where black women form a large proportion of the population. In contrast to a number of earlier studies, our analysis also shows that most of the decline in births is due to fewer pregnancies (about 3 per 1,000) and not to increases in abortions.

INTRODUCTION

More than two decades have now passed since the family cap policy was introduced under Section 1115, the voluntary provisions section of the original Social Security Act (49 Stat 620 [1935], 42 U S C 1315[a] [2006]). Family caps reduce or deny additional benefits to families who have children while receiving government assistance. The policy was introduced as a means of reforming the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program by disallowing cash benefits to children who are born while the mother herself is receiving means-tested public welfare. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA; 110 Stat 2105; US House of Representatives 1996) and subsequent reauthorizations (US House of Representatives 2005) also have provided states with the option of including family caps in their efforts to reform public assistance.

Family caps were controversial when they were introduced in the early 1990s, and contention over the moral, legal, and empirical basis of the policy has never slackened. A conflicted research literature continues to supply both supporters and detractors with evidence of the policy's success or failure in lowering nonmarital births. None of this research, however uses fertility data that extend beyond the year 2000, which begs the question of whether there are any longer-term birth effects and raises the specter that the reported (early) effects of family caps might be ephemeral and perhaps even spurious.

In this article, we address the influence family caps have on long-term fertility outcomes among women receiving public assistance, using an additional decade of publicly available national birth and abortion statistics that extends analyses through 2010. These data also help us shed light on the relative importance of abortion and contraception use in affecting nonmarital birth rates. This investigation is timely given the legal and legislative activity surrounding family caps. It is also important if we are to gain a better understanding of any enduring influence family caps may have on women's decisions to have children outside of marriage.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The nation's first family cap was implemented by the State of New Jersey in October 1992. That legislation, which remains largely unchanged today, denies cash benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to a child or children conceived while the mother is receiving cash assistance on public welfare. The family cap itself was conceived under what conventional political wisdom would characterize as a set of improbable circumstances: in a very liberal state by Wayne Bryant, an African American assemblyman who was a leader in the state's Democratic Party. In Assemblyman Bryant's own words: "Why should people on welfare be guaranteed a raise when they have additional children? . . . If a person wants to enlarge their family while on welfare, they should go to work to support the additional children like any other working family" (quoted in Claiborne 1994). Among the many welfare reform measures that have been devised since the early 1990s, family caps are explicitly designed to affect the fertility decisions of poor, unmarried women with the professed objective of reducing the nonmarital birth rate (US General Accounting Office 2001).

Since 1992, when New Jersey's family cap was approved by a Democratic Party-dominated legislature and signed into law by a Democratic gover-

nor, 23 additional state legislatures and governors from both political parties have implemented some form of “child exclusion” or family cap. Although family caps are not required under PRWORA or its subsequent reauthorizations, states have the option to adopt the caps. Many of these state laws have been sources of substantial contention, and a few state laws have been suffused with enduring, decade-long acrimony. In California, for example, the CalWORKs Maximum Family Grant (MFG) policy has precipitated a series of legal and legislative challenges since it was inaugurated in 1997. Allegations of the deleterious effects of the CalWORKs MFG have included violations of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution and charges that family caps abridge the fundamental right of family association, rights to privacy, and state constitutional guarantees of due process (Smith 2006; Dinkel 2011). Recent calls for the repeal of CalWORKs by the state legislature cite the policy’s alleged role in forced population control, overt racism, and the exacerbation of family poverty (Romero and Fuentes 2010; McBurney 2011; Gutiérrez 2013).

Demands for the repeal of Minnesota’s family cap have been just as strident as those voiced in California. Since the cap’s enactment in 2003, advocacy groups from both the political left and right have recounted a litany of harmful outcomes, not the least of which are increases in abortions and greater economic pressures on already poor families. In his testimony before the Minnesota State legislature, Scott Fischbach, executive director of Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, summed up the positions of pro-life groups from across the country when he asserted that “the family cap has proven to be a failed policy that does not serve the interest of the state or its people” (Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life 2013).

Rather than wither, as some pundits and politicians had forecast, family caps and the controversy they generate exhibit a remarkable resiliency (Camasso 2007; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). Family caps in fact serve as flash points, injecting fuel into the country’s seemingly interminable debates about a woman’s right to choose, the limits of welfare rights, and the necessity of publicly funded abortions. Both the opponents and proponents of family caps cut across the political spectrum and have comprised an unusual coalition of pro-life and welfare rights activists. These coalitions have been responsible, in large measure, for the repeal of family cap laws in an odd mixture of blue and red states. Illinois and Maryland had effectively opted out of their cap programs by 2003, with Nebraska following in 2007 and Oklahoma and Wyoming in 2009 (Romero and Fuentes 2010;

Kassasbian, Whitesell, and Huber 2012). A compelling argument for repeal in the latter three states had drawn upon several research studies, most notably those done in New Jersey by Rutgers University, which indicated that family caps encouraged women to get abortions (Appleton 1996; Jagannathan, Camasso, and Killingsworth 2004; Smith 2006; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). In Illinois and Maryland, the argument for repeal stressed the family cap's penchant for creating an added financial burden on poor women, especially poor women of color, who choose to bring their pregnancies to term and keep their babies, and for coercing women into abortions so they might avoid this financial hardship (Smith 2006; Romero and Fuentes 2010).

THE RESEARCH LITERATURE ON FAMILY CAPS

A relatively thin and conflicting literature underpins the court and legislative decisions to sustain, amend, or repeal family caps. We have summarized the published studies in table 1, providing information on key research findings, study design, and data utilized, and have added some comments on study limitations.

It is useful to categorize the studies shown in table 1 into two groups: those that simply try to determine if family caps lower nonmarital births and those that attempt to determine both if and how family caps achieve birth reductions. In the latter set of studies, two pathways have typically been examined; the first is a reduction in pregnancies attributable to contraception use or abstinence, and the second is the increased use of abortions. An increase in miscarriages as a third possible path to lower birth-rates has not been explored (Katz 2012).

Studies that limit their focus to the research question of family caps' effects have been mixed. Experiments in Delaware and Arizona both report lower nonmarital birth rates, while an experiment in Arkansas does not find any effects of family caps. Findings from observational studies are also divided with respect to the effects of family caps. While studies by Robert Fairlie and Rebecca London (1997), Jeffrey Grogger and Stephen Bronars (2001), Neeraj Kaushal and Robert Kaestner (2001), and Melissa Kearney (2004) find no evidence of a family cap effect, research by Philip Robins and Paul Fronstin (1996), Ann Horvath-Rose and H. Elizabeth Peters (2001), and Traci Mach (2001) report significant negative birth effects.

The question of how family caps affect birth rates remains open with some investigators (Joyce et al. 2004; Hussey 2010, 2011) reporting no effects

TABLE 1. Summary of the Principal Studies that Examine the Effect of Family Caps on Fertility Behavior of Poor Women

Study	Design Overview		Principal Findings		Major Limitations
		Data Used		Data Used	
Experimental: New Jersey's Family Development Program (Camasso et al. 2003; Jagannathan et al. 2004)	FC effect on birth and abortion rates	Primary data: welfare and Medicaid administrative records	In experimental group, birth rates declined 8%–10% and abortion rates increased 12%; statistically significant effects found only among short-term, black, and Hispanic welfare recipients	In experimental group, birth rates declined 8%–10% and abortion rates increased 12%; statistically significant effects found only among short-term, black, and Hispanic welfare recipients	Generalizability of findings to other states; inability to test whether effects continue after welfare exit; welfare entry effects
Delaware's A Better Chance (ABC) Program (Fein and Karweit 1997; Fein 2001)	FC effect on birth rates	Primary data: survey of welfare recipients	Rate of desired births declined for experimental group	Self-reported survey data; generalizability of findings; welfare entry effects	
Arizona Empower Welfare Demonstration Program (Mills et al. 1999)	FC effect on birth rates	Primary data: survey of welfare recipients	Experiment lowered proportion of treatment group households in which minors gave birth; no abortion effect	Self-reported survey data; generalizability of findings	
Arkansas Welfare Waiver Demonstration Program (Turturro, Benda, and Turney 1997)	FC effect on birth and abortion rates	Primary data: survey of welfare recipients; welfare administrative records	No statistically significant effect on births or abortions	Self-reported survey data on abortions; generalizability of findings; welfare entry effects; experimental contamination	
Observational (Indirect FC effects): Powers (1994); Robins and Fronstin (1996) ^a	Cross-state analysis of welfare payment effect on nonmarital births	Secondary data	Welfare decrements discourage nonmarital births	Does not measure FC effect directly; possible endogeneity of welfare benefit change	
Fairlie and London (1997); Grogger and Bronars (2001) ^b	Cross-state analysis of welfare payment effect on nonmarital births	Secondary data	No welfare effects	Does not measure FC effect directly; possible endogeneity of welfare benefit change	
Argys, Averett, and Rees (2000)	Cross-state analysis of welfare payments on pregnancies, abortions, and nonmarital births	Secondary data	Welfare decrements discourage pregnancies but have no effect on abortions	Does not measure FC effect directly; no specification of Medicaid payment	

Hussey (2011)	Panel study of families in 20 large American cities	Primary data: panel of 1,070 mothers from Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study measured at baseline and Year 1 and Year 3 follow-ups	Pregnant women on TANF less likely than other low-income pregnant women to turn to abortion. Effect is conditional on state's pro-life orientation	TANF recipients drawn from a mixture of FC and non-FC states; endogeneity issues due to inclusion of state family planning spending, abortion provider, TANF benefit variables; does not measure FC effect directly
Observational (direct FC effects): Dyer and Fairlie (2004)	FC effect on birth rates of single women ages 15–45, ≤ high school education, 5 FC states and 23 non-FC states used as a comparison group	Secondary data: CPS, 1989–99	Negative but statistically non-significant effect for New Jersey, Indiana, and Virginia; positive but statistically non-significant effect for Arkansas and Georgia	Some states in comparison group instituted FC during study period either under Section 1115 or PRWORA; possible differencing-out of treatment effect because of inclusion of some FC states as treatment cases and others as nontreatment cases
Kearney (2004)	FC effect on births to both married and unmarried women ages 15–34	Secondary data: pooled data from 1989–98 vital statistics on all 50 states	No evidence of FC effect on births in models that control for welfare benefit levels, time limit and work exemption policies, time, and state fixed effects	No specification for possible Medicaid × FC interaction; many counterintuitive and surprising findings when analyses are confined to nonmarital births (e.g., statistically significant, positive birth effect for unmarried women, black women, and for high school dropouts ages 20–24) suggest omitted interactions; excludes women ages 35–44 from analyses

TABLE 1 (continued)

Study	Design Overview	Data Used	Principal Findings	Major Limitations
Kaushal and Kaestner (2001)	FC effect on birth decisions of women with \leq high school education; married women with high school or less education and unmarried women with associate's degree used as comparison groups	Secondary data: CPS, March 1995–99 series	Most estimates not statistically significant; significant results are almost always in the wrong direction; women in non-FC states exhibit lower birth rates than those in FC states	Authors identify problems with the appropriateness of comparison groups and note that the pattern of their results is "counterintuitive" (716); inability to isolate AFDC-prone individuals
Joyce et al. (2004)	Cross-state comparison of FC effect on births and abortions; analysis restricted to women ages 15–34, low-income, and unmarried	Secondary data: birth information from vital statistics and abortion data from AGI ITOP files	No evidence that FC reduced birth or increased abortions; in some analyses for the whole sample and separately for white and black women, FC has a statistically significant, positive effect on births	Data is restricted to 18 states that collected data from 1992 to 2000 on analysis variables; no control for Medicaid or other welfare waivers such as JOBS; findings could be misleading if analyses were to include larger industrial northeastern or north-central states with more liberal social policy agendas (New Jersey, Maryland, and Illinois); inability to precisely identify women at risk for public assistance
Sabia (2008)	Cross-state comparison of FC effect on births and abortions	Secondary data: National Center for Health Statistics and CDC data, 1984–98	FCs reduce nonmarital birth rates 5%–6%; most of the effect confined to black women in their post-teens; reduction attributed to a reduction in nonmarital pregnancy rates rather than increase in abortion rates; statistically significant, negative effect on abortion rates	Author attributes counterintuitive abortion finding to the small sample of states used in the abortion equations (small sample size due to unavailability of abortion rates adjusted for race and marital status); use of CDC data for abortion; unconventional definition of population at risk (ages 15–44)

Horvath-Rose and Peters (2001)	FC effect on nonmarital birth ratios for women ages 20–49	Secondary data: vital statistics, 1984–96	Nonmarital birth ratios decline 6%–12% in FC states	Uses nonmarital birth ratio but does not measure nonmarital birth rates; imprecise measures of waiver variables; few post-FC observations
Mach (2001)	FC effect on births to women ages 18–44	Secondary data: CPS, March Supplement, 1989–98	Statistically significant, negative effect on births; separate analyses for welfare users and nonusers reveal that the effect is restricted to the former group, for which births declined by 10%	Relatively few observations of births in FC states; issues of standard errors not adjusted for non-independence
Camassio and Jagannathan (2009)	Cross-state comparison of FC effect on pregnancies, births, and abortions (1980–2000)	Secondary data: National Center for Health Statistics, 1980–2000; AGI 1980–2000	A 2 per 1,000 decline in nonmarital birth rates and a 2.5 per 1,000 increase in abortions with the latter effect restricted primarily to black women	Authors note that the measures of fertility are not adjusted for race; they also note that the post-policy period may be too short to measure the true effect of FC; the rise in overall pregnancy rate as well as the nonmarital pregnancy rate raises questions as to the targeting of the policy
Hussey (2010)	Cross-state comparison (48 states) of FC effect on abortions (1987–2000)	Secondary data: AGI	No evidence that FC influenced abortion rates in models that control for state abortion, child care, Medicaid policies, and welfare generosity	The inclusion of abortion provider measure in all estimation models introduces possibility of endogeneity; no controls for potential race-specific fertility effects; no clear rationale for the inclusion of abortion policy interaction terms in models

Note.—FC = family cap; AGI = Alan Guttmacher Institute; ITOP = induced termination of pregnancy; CDC = US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CPS = US Census Bureau Current Population Survey; PRWORA = Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; JOBS = Job Opportunities Basic Skills Training program; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children

^a Similar studies that do not directly measure a family cap but find a relationship between incremental benefit levels and birth rates are Murray (1993), Lundberg and Plotnick (1995), Jackson and Kleiman (1996), Clarke and Strauss (1998), Brinig and Buckley (1999), Rosenzweig (1999), and Hoffman and Foster (2000).

^b Additional studies finding no incremental benefit effect on births include Acs (1996) and Hoynes (1997).

of family caps on either abortion or pregnancies, some pointing to a pregnancy reduction as a result of family caps (Argys, Averett, and Rees 2000; Sabia 2008), and others to an increase in abortions as a result of family caps (Jagannathan et al. 2004; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009).

Since many of the studies described in table 1 have been reviewed in detail elsewhere (see US General Accounting Office 2001; Grogger, Karoly, and Klerman 2002; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009), we will briefly discuss the four studies referred to in table 1 that were published since 2008. We believe this limited discussion will serve to illustrate some of the data, measurement, and statistical modeling challenges that help account for the lack of consensus on the effects of family caps.

Using 3 years of data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Laura Hussey (2011) sets out to determine if pregnant women receiving TANF are more or less likely to terminate their pregnancies with abortions. The influence of a state family cap is embedded in a measure of TANF participation that also includes the possible influences of state-specific work requirements and severity of sanctions for noncompliance. Hussey reports that TANF participation has an influence on women's decisions to have abortions and that this influence is conditioned by the state's abortion rights climate. States with a pro-life orientation (i.e., those with restrictive abortion policies, low popular support for abortion, and limited access to abortion providers) exhibit a negative relationship with TANF; those with a pro-choice stance demonstrate a positive effect. While the results are consistent with the expectations of both welfare and abortion policies, it is of some concern that the study lacks a clean source of family cap variation and includes several predictor variables like the number of abortion providers and state spending on family planning that have been found to be endogenous with the abortion rates these variables seek to predict (Blank, George, and London 1996; Crowley, Jagannathan, and Falchettore 2012).

Using aggregate, state-level data on abortions and births (1984–98) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Joseph Sabia (2008) reports that family caps are associated with a 5–6 percent reduction in nonmarital birth rates. Sabia's analyses also suggest that the decrease is driven by a reduction in nonmarital pregnancies rather than by an increase in abortions. Black women especially appear to be affected by family cap policies, suggesting to Sabia that a strong stigmatizing dynamic is at work. The author points up the possibility that unobserved factors such as state-

specific anti-illegitimacy sentiment and potentially confounding effects of other state policies could influence his results. The author does not mention the possible limitation that arises from the use of a very short post-family cap observation period; in over half the states, this period is 2 years or less.

In a previous study (Camasso and Jagannathan 2009), we examine family cap policies as the application of rational choice theory to the issue of nonmarital childbearing. Family caps are designed to raise birth costs relative to the costs of contraception and abortion, but this intended outcome depends on the costs and benefits associated with these alternatives. We posit that if the cost of an abortion is lower than the costs (monetary and emotional) of giving birth, then the rational choice would be to not bring the pregnancy to term. In states where Medicaid matching funds are used to support medically necessary abortions, family caps could be expected to work synergistically with Medicaid to reduce births while increasing abortions. However, in states where contraception costs are also lower than the cost of abortion, the rational choice is the intense use of contraception and fewer pregnancies, even if the cost of abortion is less than the cost of a birth. We put this theory to test using aggregate, state-level data on births, abortions, and pregnancies from 1980 through 2000. We find that nonmarital birth rates were lower in states where a family cap was conditioned by a larger-than-average population of black women and where Medicaid funding for medically necessary abortions was available. We also provide evidence that suggests that most of the decrease is due to an increase in abortions and not to an increase in contraception use and the resultant reduction in pregnancies.

Hussey (2010) examines the relationship between welfare generosity, measured as cash assistance, family caps, Medicaid, and other welfare policies, and abortion rates, using a state-level, pooled cross-sectional, time series design. She reports that family caps demonstrate no “statistically discernable relationship with abortion rates over time” (277), even when the family cap is conditioned on state abortion policies like parental notifications, Medicaid payment restrictions, and “women’s right to know” laws. The inclusion of abortion providers as a predictor in all the estimation models introduces the possibility of policy endogeneity, while the exclusion of any race-specific or conditional analyses raises concerns about the omission of an influence found to be important in some studies of abortion decisions.

A potentially serious limitation, shared by all of the studies presented in table 1, is the relatively short time frame that is used to estimate family

cap fertility effects, with none of this research testing for a possible effect beyond 2000. The choice of this data cutoff point is understandable given the several years' delays in compiling some fertility statistics and concerns around extrapolating both birth and abortion rates too much in advance of decennial population counts.

While there are not any apparent advantages to limiting an examination of family cap effects on women's fertility decisions and behavior to the year 2000, there are several obvious disadvantages. The existing research has very little to say about the longer-term fertility influence of family cap legislation. Moreover, it provides scant insight into the relative importance that abortion and contraception use play in any birth declines. Trend data recently compiled by the Guttmacher Institute (Dreweke 2016; Finer and Zolna 2016) would appear to indicate that the years 2001–11 could offer important clues to understanding family cap dynamics. These data show that abortion rates resumed their decline after they had stalled from 1994 to 1998, a peak period of family cap implementation. These post-2000 data also show clear evidence of declining rates of unintended pregnancy. The contemporaneous abortion and pregnancy declines, following an earlier stabilization of abortions, could signal a switch in the mechanism that family caps trigger, stimulating more effective contraception use even as they rely less on abortion to lower nonmarital birth rates.

CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework employed in this research is drawn from the decision model we articulated in our earlier work (Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). This model traces its roots to earlier work of George Akerlof, Janet Yellen, and Michael Katz (1996) and Thomas Kane and Douglas Staiger (1996). The decision of women on public assistance to conceive a child outside of marriage has been viewed as a function of many factors, such as their religious beliefs about abortion and contraception, their relationship with the child's father, and their desire to have a child. The rational choice model, however, would indicate the critical importance of three interrelated factors: the family cap rule, which is hypothesized to raise the cost of bearing a child; Medicaid funding for abortion, which has been shown to lower the cost of an abortion; and racial/ethnic differences in cultural sensitivity to nonmarital childbearing. The synergistic influence of these factors manifests itself in one of three possible outcomes that reflect the relative costs

and benefits (both monetary and emotional) of childbearing and available alternatives. Theoretically, women can be expected to conceive and bear children if the costs of a nonmarital birth are less than the costs of abortion and contraception, can be expected to conceive and abort children if the cost of abortion is lower than the costs of childbearing and contraception use, and can be expected to decide not to conceive under conditions in which contraception costs are lower than either childbearing or abortion. Decisions under the first set of cost-benefit conditions would, of course, be anticipated to yield higher nonmarital birth rates, while the second two sets of conditions would be expected to lower births, the former through abortion and the latter through pregnancy reduction.

While the family cap's capacity to raise the cost of childbearing and rearing remains a subject of debate, the influences of Medicaid funding for abortion and racial/ethnic differences in preference for children outside of marriage have considerable empirical support. Stanley Henshaw and Kathryn Kost (1996) report that in states where Medicaid pays for medically necessary abortions, women covered by Medicaid have an abortion rate almost four times that of women who are not covered. A series of Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) reports continue to indicate that a disproportionate number of poor women and women receiving Medicaid are subject to unintended pregnancies, contraception failure, and reliance on abortion (Jones, Darroch, and Henshaw 2002; Boonstra et al. 2006; Jones, Finer, and Singh 2010).

Evidence of the differential effect of government welfare and fertility policies on America's racial/ethnic groups can be traced at least as far back as "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," a detailed examination of the roots of black poverty that was written by sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan (USDOL 1965). Moynihan traced the rise in nonmarital births in the black community to the breakdown of family structure due to persistent poverty, unemployment, crime, drug use, and educational disadvantages. Critics of so-called welfare racism (Roberts 1997; Soss et al. 2001; Fording 2003) claim that states with high proportions of blacks and Hispanics tend to adopt stricter work requirements for benefit recipients, shorter time limits for benefits, more rigorous welfare sanctions, and tougher family caps than states with lower proportions of minorities. Group differences in preferences for having children outside of marriage (Murray 1993; Jagannthan and Camasso 2003), preferred methods of birth control (Akerlof et al. 1996; Eckholm 2014; Finer and Zolna 2016), sex ratios, and the resultant

shape of marriage markets and labor market opportunities also indicate the importance of race and ethnicity in any analyses of fertility behavior.

In summary, the conceptual model proposed here necessitates that an investigation of family cap influence on nonmarital births take into account abortion cost and the racial composition of the targeted population. These likely conditioning factors are also hypothesized to be important components in any explanation of how family caps work.

EMPIRICAL SPECIFICATION

In table 2, we provide a description of the data sources and variable measures used in this examination of longer-term family cap effects on fertility. The data set contains state- and year-specific information from 1980 through 2010 for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The number of observations totals 1,581.

Birth data come from vital statistics available from the National Center for Health Statistics (Martin et al. 2013; Solomon-Fears 2014). These data reveal that nonmarital births peaked in 2007 at 51.8 per 1,000 and then declined to 47.5 in 2010. Data on abortions are obtained from period-specific surveys conducted by AGI. Linear interpolations are made for the 12 years when surveys were not administered. The interpolations use the same state rates of change that were observed in the yearly abortion counts made available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). According to AGI, the abortion rate has been in steady decline since 1990, dropping from 21.3 in 2000 to 17.7 in 2010 (Jones and Jerman 2014). Despite the need for imputed values, AGI abortion data are deemed preferable to CDC annual counts because of the source of primary data collection. AGI relies on surveys of known abortion providers, while CDC counts abortions reported by women, who tend to substantially underreport (Jones and Forrest 1992; Jagannathan 2001; Levine 2003). An additional problem with CDC data stems from the fact that several states, most notably California and Maryland, have not reported abortions to CDC since 1999. In the available CDC data for 1998, California accounted for nearly 20 percent of the nation's abortions.¹ The state's nonmarital birth and abortion rates are

1. According to a recent report authored by Karen Pazol, Andrea A. Creanga, and Denise J. Jamieson at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2015), abortion data for the period 2003–10 excluded Louisiana, New Hampshire, and West Virginia, as well as California and Maryland.

TABLE 2. Description of the Variables and Data Sources Used in the Analysis of Family Cap Effect

Variable Name	Source and Measurement
Fertility outcomes:	
Nonmarital birth rate	Live births to unmarried women and unmarried female population ages 15–44 years × 1,000; data for the numerator from Ventura and Bachrach (2000), Martin et al. (2002, 2013); data for the denominator from US Census Bureau for years 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 (US Census Bureau 1981, 1993, 2004, 2012); intervening years estimated from intercensal population estimate from US Census Bureau (1995, 2000, 2006)
Illegitimacy ratio	(Live births to unmarried women / total live births) × 100; see above for data sources
Abortion rate	No. of abortions / (female population 15–44 years × 1,000); data for numerator from the AGI regular surveys of abortion providers, 1980–2010; data interpolated for 1983, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, and 2009 (years when surveys were not conducted)
Pregnancy rate; (a) nonmarital, (b) overall	Numerator is the sum of nonmarital births and abortions; denominator for (a) is same as for nonmarital birth rate; denominator for (b) is same as for abortions
Focal policy variables:	
Family cap	Coded 1 if policy operating in the state and year, otherwise 0; data for pre-PRWORA (i.e., sec. 1115 waiver implementation) from (US DHHS, ASPE, 1997); data on PRWORA policies through 2010 from Rowe (2000), Rowe, Murphy, and Williamson (2006), Council of Economic Advisers (1997, 1999), Kassabian et al. (2012), and Romero and Fuentes (2010)
Medicaid pays for abortion	Medically necessary abortions are coded 1 if policy operating in the state and year, otherwise 0; data from the AGI (Gold 1980, 1981; Nestor and Gold 1984; Gold and Macias 1986; Gold and Guardado 1988; Gold and Daley 1991; Daley and Gold 1993; Sollom, Gold, and Saul 1996; Boonstra and Sonfield 2000; Nash 2001, 2004; Boonstra 2007; Sonfield and Gold 2012; AGI 2015);
Other welfare policies:	
Time limits; work requirements, enhanced JOBS	Same coding sources as for family cap; more stringent time limits and work requirements than PRWORA from USDHHS (1997); Rowe (2000, Rowe et al. (2006), Kassabian et al. (2012)
Political climate:	
Republican governor; Republican senate; Republican house	Coded 1 if Republican, otherwise 0; data from Council of State Governments (1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)
Racial and ethnic differences:	
Female population black (%); female population Hispanic (%) ^a	Population females, ages 15–44, by race for state and year; data from US Census Bureau Population and Housing Unit Counts (1981, 1993, 2004, 2012) with intervening years from US Census Bureau (1995, 2000, 2006)

TABLE 2 (continued)

Variable Name	Source and Measurement
Economic and demographic controls: Unemployment rate; women in labor force; ratio of unmarried women to all women	Data on unemployment from USDOL Bureau of Labor Statistics for years 1980–2010; no. of women in labor force for state and year from USDOL (1982a, 1982b, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1997–2010); data for numerator and denominator for ratio from US Census Bureau with intervening years calculated from intercensal population estimate

Note.—USDOL = US Department of Labor; JOBS = Job Opportunities Basic Skills Training Program; AGI = Alan Guttmacher Institute; PRWORA = Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; ASPE = Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation; USDHHS = US Department of Health and Human Services

^a In our regression analyses, we create dummy variables for female black and female Hispanic, coding them as 1 when their respective proportion exceed the national average over the study period, and 0 otherwise.

calculated in the standard way: data for the denominators come from the Census Bureau and the Current Population Survey (CPS). For the birth analysis, the denominator is the number of nonmarried women ages 15–44 years. For abortion rates, the denominator is the number of all women ages 15–44. Illegitimacy is measured as the ratio of the number of live births to unmarried women to the total number of live births (Ventura and Bachrach 2000). By using both birth rates and ratios, our analyses acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of both outcome measures (McLanahan 1985; Kearney 2004).

Pregnancies are defined as the sum of births and abortions; this also follows the standard practice (Levine 2003; Sabia 2008). Because marital-adjusted rates of abortions are unavailable at the state level, two pregnancy rates are calculated. The first rate uses a denominator of unmarried women, while the second employs the population of all women ages 15–44 and is similar to the nonmarital pregnancy ratio used by Sabia (2008).

FOCAL POLICY VARIABLES

The analysis includes a measure of whether states have had family caps that were authorized under Section 1115 Waivers and/or under the voluntary provisions of PRWORA. Table 3 lists the implementation dates for the 24 states that adopted family cap policies. Table 3 also profiles fertility measures and indicators for minority women who are at risk on these measures.

TABLE 3. A Demographic and Reproductive Outcomes Profile of the 23 States with Family Cap Policies, 1992–2010

State	Family Cap Implementation Date	Percent Female Population Ages 15–44		Percent AFDC-TANF Population Ages 15–44		Nonmarital Birth Rate	Illegitimacy Ratio	Abortion Rate
				Black	Hispanic			
		Black	Hispanic	Black	Hispanic			
Arizona	November 95	3.14	22.22	10.56	39.28	57.56	35.07	20.82
Arkansas	July 94	15.93	2.43	61.99	1.37	49.89	32.65	10.68
California	August 97	6.79	28.65	20.61	35.98	48.40	31.72	35.87
Connecticut	January 96	8.44	8.10	32.25	33.49	34.17	28.09	24.80
Delaware	October 95	18.28	3.89	61.70	6.50	44.45	34.66	31.75
Florida	October 96	14.15	14.84	53.60	15.30	47.30	35.03	30.42
Georgia	January 95	28.36	3.72	75.17	1.24	49.49	34.45	21.29
Idaho	July 97	.39	6.75	.99	11.03	32.76	18.29	8.32
Illinois	December 95	14.93	10.05	64.49	9.22	44.51	32.69	23.52
Indiana	May 95	8.28	2.93	38.25	4.62	39.77	28.71	10.67
Maryland	March 96	26.49	3.80	72.70	1.39	42.10	34.44	28.27
Massachusetts	November 95	5.10	5.87	17.54	25.50	27.26	25.08	24.29
Minnesota	July 2003	2.97	2.23	21.96	5.70	30.84	23.12	15.41
Mississippi	October 95	36.27	1.18	84.1	.26	59.87	42.98	7.48
Nebraska	November 95	3.82	4.30	26.17	9.51	35.14	23.52	13.74
New Jersey	October 92	13.07	11.52	52.48	25.24	35.79	27.78	34.58
North Carolina	July 96	22.15	3.26	64.86	3.30	44.33	31.18	21.40
North Dakota	July 98	.60	1.07	1.59	1.35	31.27	22.03	13.08
Oklahoma	October 96	7.35	4.28	32.43	4.20	46.16	29.38	12.92
South Carolina	October 96	29.80	1.94	75.81	.47	48.95	36.42	12.28
Tennessee	September 96	16.35	1.70	56.79	.74	44.55	31.98	17.12
Virginia	July 95	19.37	3.88	64.33	2.62	36.95	27.49	20.29
Wisconsin	January 96	5.24	2.96	40.85	6.22	33.45	26.29	12.61
Wyoming	February 97	.75	6.30	3.56	12.90	37.31	24.26	3.96
Average among family cap states		12.83	6.58	43.11	10.72	41.76	29.89	18.98
National average		10.75	6.76	33.71	10.49	40.80	29.65	20.50

Note.—Idaho discontinued the cap in 2000, Maryland in 2003, Illinois in 2005, and Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Wyoming in 2006. Minnesota passed family cap legislation in 2003 but repealed it in 2013.

Data on implementation and repeal dates are gleaned from sources published by the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS; see table 2 for sources), especially the Welfare Rules Databook series compiled by the Urban Institute. It would appear from the variable distributions in table 3 that a sizable majority of states with family caps (16 of 24) have welfare caseloads that are predominantly black and Hispanic. Table 3 also shows that these states represent a broad range of nonmarital birth rates. Some states like California, Florida, and Maryland have nonmarital births and abortions well above the national average (40.8 nonmarital births per 1,000 women; 20.5 abortions per 1,000); others, including Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Nebraska, have rates that are considerably below the national average. The ratio of black women in the population to black women on welfare is approximately 3.5 to 1 in states with a family cap and about 3 to 1 in states without a cap; these statistics reflect the difficulties black women have in escaping public assistance under welfare reform.

Information on state Medicaid funding for medically necessary abortions is obtained from National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), the Pro-Choice America Foundation, and AGI. Unlike studies on abortion by Phillip Levine, Amy Trainor, and David Zimmerman (1996), Stephen Matthews, David Ribar, and Mark Wilhelm (1997), and Hussey (2010, 2011), this study does not include measures for health inputs such as the number of abortion providers and family planning clinics. Joyce (1987), Blank, George, and London (1996), and our own sensitivity analyses with these data reveal that these provider inputs tend to be endogenous with Medicaid benefits, rules, and restrictions.

OTHER WELFARE POLICIES

Our analyses also include measures indicating whether a state implemented time limits or an enhanced Job Opportunity and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program in a specific year. Time limits and work requirements, like family caps, are acceptable program modifications under Section 1115 waivers. Both could have exerted independent influences on fertility behavior. Under PRWORA and its reauthorizations, states can establish time limits shorter than the prescribed 5 years and adopt work requirements, such as removing work exemptions based on the age of the child, that are more stringent than those specified under the federal law. We use a variable that distinguishes states with PRWORA-era rules that are more rigorous than

the federal standards (see table 2 for sources). The coding of welfare time limits and work requirements follows from the research of Joe Soss and colleagues (2001) and Richard Fording (2003).

It is important to note that time limits and more stringent work requirements (like those in the enhanced JOBS program) have often been used to construct policy control variables in cross-state studies of family caps (Horvath-Rose and Peters 2001; Kearney 2004; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). Our analyses anticipate that their inclusion helps purge family caps' effects on fertility plans and behaviors of the influences that these provisions may exert. It is also worth noting, however, that the estimated effects of time limits and work provisions on fertility have been found to be much smaller than the effect of family caps.

POLITICAL CLIMATE

Many analyses of family caps have included general political climate variables (Matthews et al. 1997; Sabia 2008; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009; Hussey 2011). For each year between 1980 and 2010, our analysis includes the political party affiliation, Republican or Democrat, of the state governor; whether the state senate was controlled by Republicans or Democrats; and whether the state house (assembly) was controlled by Republicans or Democrats. Of the many political climate variables that have been employed in studies of welfare reform, these three have demonstrated the most consistent, significant relationship with measures of fertility behavior (Blank et al. 1996; Sabia 2008). Political variables are a mainstay in models that seek to explain the adoption of stringent welfare reforms (Soss et al. 2001; Fording 2003). Republican regimes are hypothesized to be a gauge of the rigor with which reforms are monitored and enforced (Matthews et al. 1997; Sabia 2008).

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

Our analyses include indicators of above/below national percentages of black and Hispanic women ages 15–44 years in a state's general population. General population percentages, rather than the percentages of black and Hispanic women on AFDC/TANF caseloads, are used to avoid the possibility of policy endogeneity (Moffitt and Ver Ploeg 2001). As table 3 shows, the relationship between population and caseload compositions is much closer for Hispanic women than for black women.

ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS

The three measures used as economic and demographic controls (the state unemployment rate, the number of women in the labor force, and the ratio of unmarried to married women) are used individually or in some combination in a number of family cap analyses (Horvath-Rose and Peters 2001; Mach 2001; Jagannathan and Camasso 2003; Kearney 2004; Sabia 2008; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009). These variables are intended to capture the economic conditions faced by women on public assistance. Specifically, they measure the probability of wages and the opportunity costs these wages portend. Data from the Census and the Census Bureau's intercensal population estimates provide information on the state population over the 31-year study period. State fixed effects are also employed in an effort to control for differences in state economic, political, and social environments that are not directly measured.

EMPIRICAL ESTIMATION

We use a sequence of five regression equations to analyze the effects of family caps on women's fertility behavior. This sequence closely follows from a theoretical framework and a previous literature that suggests that the influence of family caps is conditioned by a state's abortion climate, particularly the policy of Medicaid funding for medically necessary abortions, and by the proportion of minority women in the state's overall population of women who are at risk for a pregnancy. This hierarchical sequence allows tests for any independent effects of family caps but also helps gauge the extent to which any marginal influence may be incorrectly calculated because of error from omitted variable bias and from bias due to omitted interactions (Meyer 1995; Stock and Watson 2015). A form of the model (2) below is the specification most typically encountered in the cross-state comparison research on family caps.

MODELING SEQUENCE

For each of our five fertility outcomes we fit these models:

$$Y_{st} = T_t \gamma + \text{family_cap}_{st} \lambda_1 + \sigma_s + \varepsilon_{st}. \quad (1)$$

$$Y_{st} = T_t \gamma + \mathbf{W}_{st} \beta_1 + \mathbf{P}_{st} \beta_2 + \mathbf{X}_{st} \beta_3 + \text{family_cap}_{st} \lambda_1 + \sigma_s + \varepsilon_{st}. \quad (2)$$

$$Y_{st} = T_t \gamma + \mathbf{W}_{st} \beta_1 + \mathbf{P}_{st} \beta_2 + \mathbf{X}_{st} \beta_3 + \text{Medicaid}_{st} \beta_4 + \text{family_cap}_{st} \lambda_1 + \sigma_s + \varepsilon_{st}. \quad (3)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
Y_{st} = & T_t \gamma + \mathbf{W}_{st} \beta_1 + \mathbf{P}_{st} \beta_2 + \mathbf{X}_{st} \beta_3 + \text{Medicaid}_{st} \beta_4 + \text{family_cap}_{st} \lambda_1 \\
& + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{Medicaid}_{st}) \lambda_2 + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{black}_{st}) \lambda_3 \\
& + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{Medicaid}_{st} \times \text{black}_{st}) \lambda_4 \\
& + (\text{Medicaid}_{st} \times \text{black}_{st}) \beta_5 + \sigma_s + \varepsilon_{st}.
\end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
Y_{st} = & T_t \gamma + \mathbf{W}_{st} \beta_1 + \mathbf{P}_{st} \beta_2 + \mathbf{X}_{st} \beta_3 + \text{Medicaid}_{st} \beta_4 + \text{family_cap}_{st} \lambda_1 \\
& + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{Medicaid}_{st}) \lambda_2 + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{Hispanic}_{st}) \lambda_3 \\
& + (\text{family_cap}_{st} \times \text{Medicaid}_{st} \times \text{Hispanic}_{st}) \lambda_4 \\
& + (\text{Medicaid}_{st} \times \text{Hispanic}_{st}) \beta_5 + \sigma_s + \varepsilon_{st}.
\end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

In equations (1)–(5), subscript s denotes each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and subscript t denotes a specific year from the period 1980–2010; T represents a linear and quadratic function of time, a specification deemed prudent because of the length of the time series and the trend patterns in both the nonmarital birth and abortion data discussed earlier.² The term W is a vector of state welfare policy variables, P represents a vector of political climate variables, X represents a vector of economic and demographic controls, Medicaid indicates whether or not state s paid for medically necessary abortions under Medicaid in year t , σ represents a vector of state fixed effects, and ε is a random error term that varies by state and year; Y represents the birth, abortion, or pregnancy rate for state s in year t .

The measures of fertility are not adjusted for race. The data for Hispanic births are not available before 1990. Data for Hispanic, white, and black abortions are not available in a majority of states even today. Accordingly, we

2. It has been suggested (see, e.g., Grogger et al. 2002; Danielson and Klerman 2008) that time fixed effects are preferable to the use of a single time trend variable or a trend and quadratic trend specification in eliminating bias arising from omitted variables that change over time but are invariant across states in a given year. We have used this year fixed effects specification (tables are available in the appendix, available online), and we find that birth rate and ratio effects for family caps increase substantially from those reported here under the more parsimonious linear and quadratic time trend model. While time fixed effects appear to be more appropriate in relatively short series and panels with differentiated cross sections (states) that yield an overall bumpy trend pattern, this does not appear to be the case in our data, where trend is relatively smooth, as indicated in our series of nonmarital birth and abortion rates. The increase in significance levels in our regressions and Lincom tests where time fixed effects are employed appear to indicate a possible misspecification resulting from the failure to impose a structure on time when that imposition is called for by the data.

believe that the current approach, which relies on right-hand adjustment to explore policy-race composition interactions, provides the most statistically efficient way to undertake the analyses. The use of race-adjusted data to study birth and abortion effects has typically led to analyses with large numbers of missing observations and an attendant loss of statistical power (Joyce et al. 2004; Sabia 2008).

We conducted regression analyses using the XTREG procedure in version 13.0 of the statistical software STATA. Robust standard errors are calculated by clustering by state and assuming heteroskedastic standard errors. Although the XTREG procedure corrects for both overtime correlation within panels and for heteroskedasticity across panels, it does not adjust for the possibility of correlation across panels (serial correlation). To address this potential problem, estimates of specifications (1)–(5) are also adjusted for first-order autocorrelation by using STATA's Feasible Generalized Least Square (XTGLS) and Prais-Winsten (XTPCSE) procedures. Both of these methods provide corrections for regional correlation (i.e., correlation across state panels).

DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY VARIABLES

Table 4 provides information on the distribution of the study variables for the 50 states and the District of Columbia over the 31-year study period. For the qualitative independent variables like family caps and Medicaid funding for abortion, the means represent the proportion of state-years in which the policy is observed. Because interpolations are used for years where data are unavailable, there are no missing cases in the analysis.

It should be noted that the welfare benefit, welfare caseload, and AFDC population data shown in table 4 are presented to provide context for the regression analyses that follow and are not used in any regression model. These variables have been associated with a policy endogeneity dynamic in some state investigations of the effects of welfare reform.

RESULTS

Tables 5–9 present the results of regressions from the models of nonmarital births, illegitimacy ratio, abortions, nonmarital pregnancies, and overall pregnancies. Results from the analyses of the nonmarital birth rate (per 1,000 women of childbearing age) are shown in table 5. Models (1)–(5) show

TABLE 4. Distribution of the National Study Variables across State-Year Observations (1,581 Observations)

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Nonmarital birth rate	40.796	11.086	3.256	72.379
Illegitimacy ratio	29.653	10.024	2.332	69.584
Abortion rate	20.503	16.523	.326	175.358
Nonmarital pregnancy rate	83.997	29.737	38.128	322.269
Overall pregnancy rate	86.957	17.827	57.870	231.737
Family cap	.209	.407	0	1
Work requirements	.275	.446	0	1
Time limits	.220	.414	0	1
Medicaid pays for abortion	.314	.464	0	1
Republican governor	.467	.499	0	1
Republican senate	.381	.486	0	1
Republican house	.347	.476	0	1
Women in labor force	1,194,673	1,296,287	80,000	7,938,000
Ratio of unmarried women to all women	.472	.061	.336	.723
Female population black (%)	10.76	11.90	.22	69.74
Female population Hispanic (%)	6.76	8.33	.45	46.26
Maximum welfare benefit (1980) ^a	295	106	96	492
Welfare caseload (1980) ^a	204,427	272,061	6,848	1,400,000
Percentage AFDC with child age 0–2 years (1980) ^a	35.8	4.8	24.6	53.1
Percentage AFDC black (1980) ^a	34.9	29.6	0	98.0
Percentage AFDC Hispanic (1980) ^a	4.4	8.9	0	37.2
Unemployment rate	5.9	2.1	2.2	18.0

Note.—AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

^a Not used in any fixed effects analyses because of potential endogeneity; presented to provide an informational context.

the expected and consistently negative relationship between a state's implementation of a family cap and the nonmarital birth rate. The marginal effects indicate that the estimated stand-alone effect of the family cap, even after adjusting for the covariates, state-fixed effects, time trends, and Medicaid funding for abortion, is about 2 fewer births per 1,000 women. If the regression model is respecified to include the hypothesized conditioning influences of race and Medicaid funding, the main effect of the family cap diminishes to statistical nonsignificance. None of the family cap interaction terms are significant, however, possibly indicating the fragmenting of the family cap's effect among the higher-order interactions. Table 5 also shows statistically significant effects of one political variable (Republican state senate majority) and the state's unemployment rate. Higher unemployment rates result in reduction of state nonmarital birth rates.

Table 6 reports the same sequence of analyses, this time predicting the ratio of nonmarital births to 100 live births. The results show significant stand-alone effects for family caps after adjusting for covariates, fixed ef-

TABLE 5. Fixed Effects Regression Results for Nonmarital Birth Rate (1,581 Observations)

Regressor	Specification				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Family cap	-1.443 (-1.54)	-2.290* (-1.89)	-2.266* (-1.89)	-.688 (-.70)	-1.872 (-1.51)
Ratio of unmarried women to all women		-21.12 (-.87)	-18.36 (-.74)	-22.99 (-.82)	-22.31 (-.78)
Female population black		-1.875 (-1.21)	-1.803 (-1.17)	-1.432 (-.86)	-1.445 (-.88)
Female population Hispanic		-1.469 (-.83)	-1.543 (-.87)	-1.216 (-.63)	-1.109 (-.47)
Republican governor		-.014 (-.04)	-.002 (-.01)	-.023 (-.06)	-.043 (-.11)
Republican senate		1.406** (2.08)	1.405** (2.07)	1.591** (2.48)	1.429** (2.11)
Republican house		-.948 (-1.23)	-.972 (-1.26)	-1.151 (-1.49)	-1.203 (-1.57)
Work requirement		-.423 (-.40)	-.266 (-.26)	-.357 (-.36)	-.025 (-.03)
Time limit		1.112 (.95)	1.033 (.89)	.676 (.55)	.755 (.66)
Unemployment rate		-.085* (-1.88)	-.088* (-1.96)	-.085* (-1.91)	-.088** (-2.12)
Women in labor force		.000 (.39)	.000 (.36)	.000 (.57)	.000 (.35)
Medicaid pays for abortion			-1.212 (-1.23)	.0772 (.05)	-.0898 (-.08)
Medicaid × family cap				-2.444 (-.90)	-1.709 (-.64)
Female population black × family cap					-1.055 (-.75)
Female population black × Medicaid					-1.801 (-.89)
Medicaid × family cap × female population black					-1.333 (-.41)
Female population Hispanic × family cap					2.122 (1.01)
Female population Hispanic × Medicaid					-1.548 (-.85)
Medicaid × family cap × female population Hispanic					-1.971 (-.52)
Time	1.474*** (15.15)	1.462*** (11.36)	1.450*** (11.20)	1.452*** (11.32)	1.468*** (11.60)
Time ²	-.025*** (-9.24)	-.0211*** (-5.49)	-.0211*** (-5.52)	-.021*** (-4.90)	-.021*** (-4.98)
Constant	25.88*** (32.10)	35.44*** (3.52)	34.76** (3.40)	36.03** (3.21)	36.06** (3.18)

Note.—Results are estimated with XTREG command in STATA version 13 with robust standard errors. Results in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

* $p \leq .10$.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

TABLE 6. Fixed Effects Regression Results for Illegitimacy Ratio (1,581 Observations)

Regressor	Specification				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Family cap	−1.261** (−2.02)	−1.197* (−1.84)	−1.206* (−1.85)	−.268 (−.52)	−.865 (−1.48)
Ratio of unmarried women to all women		44.54** (2.87)	43.49** (2.94)	39.61** (2.50)	40.20** (2.54)
Female population black		.130 (.19)	.102 (.15)	.549 (.72)	.379 (.53)
Female population Hispanic		−2.048** (−2.02)	−2.020** (−2.02)	−1.766 (−1.64)	−2.558* (−1.78)
Republican governor		.024 (.09)	.019 (.07)	−.015 (−.06)	.046 (.19)
Republican senate		.465 (1.26)	.466 (1.27)	.661* (1.91)	.418 (1.19)
Republican house		−.173 (−.47)	−.164 (−.45)	−.350 (−.99)	−.317 (−.91)
Work requirement		.044 (.08)	−.016 (−.03)	.019 (.04)	.041 (.08)
Time limit		.356 (.60)	.386 (.63)	−.129 (−.22)	.132 (.24)
Unemployment rate		.055* (1.88)	.056* (1.97)	.062** (2.22)	.056** (2.05)
Women in labor force		−.000 (−.38)	−.000 (−.36)	−.000 (−.29)	−.000 (−.65)
Medicaid pays for abortion			.461 (.65)	.816 (1.01)	.834 (1.07)
Medicaid × family cap				−1.292 (−1.18)	−3.114** (−2.15)
Female population black × family cap					.203 (.26)
Female population black × Medicaid					.425 (.23)
Medicaid × family cap × female population black					−3.820** (−2.43)
Female population Hispanic × family cap					2.683** (2.16)
Female population Hispanic × Medicaid					.468 (.39)
Medicaid × family cap × female population Hispanic					−1.023 (−.52)
Time	1.138*** (20.12)	1.111*** (13.52)	1.116*** (13.82)	1.137*** (15.21)	1.140*** (14.80)
Times ²	−.011*** (−7.25)	−.016*** (−6.73)	−.016*** (−6.72)	−.016*** (−6.20)	−.016*** (−6.55)
Constant	15.40*** (27.95)	−3.022 (−.47)	−2.765 (−.45)	−1.702 (−.26)	−1.339 (−.21)

Note.—Results are estimated with XTREG command in STATA version 13 with robust standard errors. Results in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

* $p \leq .10$.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

fects, time trend, and Medicaid funding for abortion. When the conditioning effects of race and Medicaid are introduced in (4) and (5), the main effect of family caps once again diminishes to nonsignificance. But in this analysis the effect of family caps reemerges as statistically significant in the three-way interactions. The unemployment rate is once again significant and the positive sign indicates the influence on all births is larger than it is for nonmarital births.

In table 7, we report the family cap's estimated long-term effect on the abortion rate. Despite the fact that the signs of the regression coefficients are in the hypothesized direction, we do not observe any statistically significant effect of family caps in (1)–(5). The introduction of conditioning effects does reveal a statistically significant effect of family caps in states with higher proportions of black women in (4), but this type of effect is not observed in states with higher proportions of Hispanic women in (5).

Tables 8 and 9 report the regression results from the analyses of pregnancies. In table 8, the family cap is estimated to increase nonmarital pregnancies when measured only as a main effect, but the sign changes when the conditioning effects of race and Medicaid funding are introduced. In equation (4), both the (Medicaid \times family_cap) and the (black \times family_cap) interactions approach significance, once again indicating the possibility of the fragmentation of overall effect among hypothesized conditioning variables. In the analyses of the overall pregnancy rate (table 9), the pattern of effects are similar to those found with nonmarital pregnancies. The positive, albeit nonsignificant, influence of family caps changes sign in the hypothesized direction when the conditioning effects of Medicaid funding and race are introduced. In this analysis, however, the (black \times family_cap) interaction is statistically significant for (4), as is the (Medicaid \times family_cap) interaction in the analysis of Hispanic women in (5). The unemployment rate is also significant, indicating that higher levels of unemployment are associated with lower numbers of pregnancies.

Each of the models shown in tables 5–9 were reestimated with XTGLS and Prais-Winston regression procedures.³ Overall, the pattern of the reestimated model results do not differ markedly from the original procedures, but the marginal effects tend to be smaller in the analyses of illegitimacy ratio, although still statistically significant. In three of the five modeling sequences presented, there is evidence of omitted interaction, or, in other

3. These results are available from the authors.

TABLE 7. Fixed Effects Regression Results for Abortion Rate (1,581 Observations)

Regressor	Specification				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Family cap	2.146 (1.04)	1.827 (1.13)	1.787 (1.11)	-1.874 (-1.12)	-349 (-26)
Ratio of unmarried women to all women		149.32 (1.46)	144.61 (1.48)	149.60 (1.55)	150.91 (1.46)
Female population black		-2.388 (-1.48)	-2.510 (-1.51)	-2.739 (-1.57)	-2.834 (-1.56)
Female population Hispanic		-4.929 (-.97)	-4.803 (-.96)	-5.261 (-.97)	-7.185 (-1.13)
Republican governor		-.371 (-.70)	-.392 (-.75)	-.342 (-.71)	-.426 (-.78)
Republican senate		-.031 (-.05)	-.029 (-.04)	-.400 (-.53)	-.215 (-.28)
Republican house		-.747 (-1.05)	-.707 (-1.03)	-.548 (-.83)	-.578 (-0.95)
Work requirement		.781 (.54)	.514 (.39)	1.099 (.70)	.587 (.41)
Time limit		1.625 (1.07)	1.759 (1.07)	1.804 (1.10)	1.993 (1.11)
Unemployment rate		-.022 (-.23)	-.016 (-.18)	-.018 (-.23)	-.018 (-.21)
Women in labor force		.000 (.67)	.000 (.68)	.000 (.60)	.000 (.34)
Medicaid pays for abortion			2.069 (.96)	-2.536 (-.84)	1.021 (.51)
Medicaid \times family cap				4.325 (.84)	.855 (.51)
Female population black \times family cap				5.301* (1.92)	
Female population black \times Medicaid				10.35 (1.28)	
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population black				-3.130 (-.48)	
Female population Hispanic \times family cap					6.888 (1.42)
Female population Hispanic \times Medicaid					1.127 (.36)
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population Hispanic					-2.942 (-.58)
Time	-.579*** (-5.47)	-.785** (-2.41)	-.765** (-2.50)	-.720** (-2.80)	-.706** (-2.58)
Time ²	.002 (.75)	-.014 (-1.44)	-.014 (-1.44)	-.015 (-1.49)	-.016 (-1.45) (-.58)
Constant	28.70*** (17.47)	-33.46 (-.80)	-32.31 (-.79)	-33.45 (-.85)	-32.89 (-.79)

Note.—Results are estimated with XTREG command in STATA version 13 with robust standard errors. Results in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

* $p \leq .10$.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

TABLE 8. Fixed Effects Regression Results for Nonmarital Pregnancy Rate (1,581 Observations)

Regressor	Specification				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Family cap	2.538 (.68)	1.334 (.43)	1.296 (.42)	-2.363 (-.71)	-0.967 (-.34)
Ratio of unmarried women to all women		134.47 (.81)	130.00 (.81)	130.50 (.80)	130.96 (.75)
Female population black		-4.960 (-1.22)	-5.076 (-1.24)	-4.834 (-1.14)	-4.990 (-1.13)
Female population Hispanic		-8.397 (-.92)	-8.278 (-.93)	-8.375 (-.86)	-10.698 (-.96)
Republican governor		-.871 (-.73)	-.891 (-.75)	-.765 (-.64)	-1.011 (-.81)
Republican senate		1.949 (1.31)	1.950 (1.33)	1.489 (.93)	1.773 (1.11)
Republican house		-2.340 (-1.33)	-2.302 (-1.32)	-2.357 (-1.34)	-2.500 (-1.46)
Work requirement		.477 (.17)	.224 (.08)	.991 (.32)	.641 (.23)
Time limit		3.341 (1.18)	3.468 (1.15)	3.082 (.98)	3.395 (1.06)
Unemployment rate		-.0955 (-.52)	-.089 (-.51)	-.094 (-.57)	-.095 (-.59)
Women in labor force		.000 (.05)	.000 (.06)	-.000 (-.04)	-.000 (-.29)
Medicaid pays for abortion			1.963 (.50)	-2.791 (-.47)	2.256 (.56)
Medicaid \times family cap				1.922 (.19)	-.023 (-.01)
Female population black \times family cap				7.339 (1.49)	
Female population black \times Medicaid				12.71 (.90)	
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population black				-4.104 (-.33)	
Female population Hispanic \times family cap					12.225 (1.41)
Female population Hispanic \times Medicaid					-.668 (-.11)
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population Hispanic					-8.710 (-.78)
Time		-.126 (-.49)	-.285 (-.48)	-.265 (-.47)	-.209 (-.43)
Time ²		-.019*** (-3.77)	-.032** (-2.07)	-.032** (-2.07)	-.033* (-1.97)
Constant		91.87*** (29.59)	39.81 (.59)	40.90 (.62)	41.03 (.62)
					42.62 (.61)

Note.—Results are estimated with XTREG command in STATA version 13 with robust standard errors. Results in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

* $p \leq .10$.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

TABLE 9. Fixed Effects Regression Results for Overall Pregnancy Rate (1,581 Observations)

Regressor	Specification				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Family cap	3.047 (1.32)	2,650 (1.13)	2,657 (1.14)	-3.375 (-1.17)	-.167 (-.08)
Ratio of unmarried women to all women		135.67 (1.20)	136.48 (1.23)	148.85 (1.34)	141.57 (1.20)
Female population black		-3.820 (-1.22)	-3.800 (-1.21)	-3.786 (-1.17)	-4.495 (-1.34)
Female population Hispanic		-3.635 (-.64)	-3.657 (-.65)	-4.130 (-.68)	-6.844 (-.93)
Republican governor		-1.042 (-1.36)	-1.039 (-1.36)	-.864 (-1.19)	-1.067 (-1.35)
Republican senate		1.775** (2.08)	1.774** (2.08)	1.227 (1.32)	1.618 (1.66)
Republican house		-1.585 (-1.32)	-1.592 (-1.34)	-1.470 (-1.17)	-1.349 (-1.11)
Work requirement		-1.626 (-.89)	-1.580 (-.88)	-1.158 (-.59)	-1.863 (-.99)
Time limit		2.586 (1.20)	2.563 (1.17)	2.552 (1.15)	3.127 (1.33)
Unemployment rate		-.229** (-2.28)	-.230** (-2.33)	-.241** (-2.53)	-.244** (-2.52)
Women in labor force		.000 (1.08)	.000 (1.07)	.000 (1.09)	.000 (.92)
Medicaid pays for abortion			-.353 (-.18)	-3.435 (-.98)	-2.582 (-1.42)
Medicaid \times family cap				6.613 (.93)	6.092** (2.56)
Female population black \times family cap				8.442** (2.26)	
Female population black \times Medicaid				5.988 (.78)	
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population black				-2.038 (-.24)	
Female population Hispanic \times family cap					6.758 (1.21)
Female population Hispanic \times Medicaid					3.685 (1.00)
Medicaid \times family cap \times female population Hispanic					-8.084 (-1.18)
Time	-1.308*** (-6.48)	-1.547*** (-4.37)	-1.550*** (-4.48)	-1.533*** (-5.07)	-1.497*** (-4.62)
Time ²	.0207** (3.43)	.00706 (.56)	.00706 (.56)	.00541 (.42)	.00607 (.44)
Constant	100.30*** (50.61)	43.00 (.92)	42.80 (.93)	38.84 (.86)	43.22 (.91)

Note.—Results are estimated with XTREG command in STATA version 13 with robust standard errors. Results in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

words, there is evidence that the family cap's effect is being redirected by the conditioning effects of race and Medicaid funding for abortions. Statistical significance reemerges in an interaction term in these sequences. Such absorption is not as clear in the model sequences for nonmarital births and nonmarital pregnancies.

The interpretation of a relatively complex set of hierarchical, difference-in-difference estimators can be challenging when calculating joint marginal effects. The piecemeal examination of interaction coefficients can be misleading if specific terms share substantial amounts of explained variation. For this reason, we compute the point estimates and standard errors for the joint effects of family cap (λ_1), family_cap \times Medicaid ($\lambda_1 + \lambda_2$), family_cap \times female_population_black (or Hispanic; $\lambda_1 + \lambda_3$), and family_cap \times Medicaid \times female_population_black (or Hispanic; $\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$). Estimates use STATA's Lincom procedure. This post-estimation procedure collects terms of theoretical interest (e.g., terms involving the family cap) when multiple interactions are hypothesized.

Of the three regression methods we employed (XTREG, XTPCSE-PRAIS-WINSTON, and XTGLS-FGLS), the XTGLS estimates generally provided the more conservative interactions of family cap effects, and we used the results from this method to collect terms for the models (4) and (5). In table 10, we show the results of this analysis for the five fertility measures, separately for black and Hispanic conditioning variables.

The regression coefficient for the family cap effect on nonmarital births, conditioned by both Medicaid funding and the percentage of black women ($\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$) is -1.72 (SE = $.62$). This statistically significant effect suggests that family caps lower nonmarital births by about 2 per 1,000 in states with a higher-than-average percentage of black women, where abortions are funded through Medicaid. The significance of this complex interaction points out that regression models can be misleading if they specify the family cap as simply an independent main effect. Such models can fail to pinpoint when and where policy effects can be expected to occur. In model (5), the interaction ($\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$) is also statistically significant, pointing to a decline of just over 1 nonmarital birth per 1,000 in states that have higher-than-average percentages of Hispanic women and that also pay for abortions through Medicaid funds.

The illegitimacy ratio joint effect ($\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$) for black women is -1.85 (SE = $.46$) or approximately 2 fewer births per 100 births in states with family caps, Medicaid funding for medically necessary abortions, and

TABLE 10. Joint Effects of Family Caps, Medicaid Funding, and Racial Proportion from Lincom Procedure—XTGLS-FGLS Estimation

Joint Effect	Blacks		Hispanics	
	Coefficient	Z	Coefficient	Z
Nonmarital birth rate:				
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)$	−1.16**	−2.10	−1.25**	−2.16
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_3)$	−.79	−1.42	−.61	−1.20
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$	−1.72**	−2.79	−1.23**	−2.39
Illegitimacy ratio:				
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)$	−.94**	−2.85	−1.17**	−3.04
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_3)$	−.24	−.86	.01	.05
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$	−1.85***	−4.04	−1.13***	−3.33
Abortion rate:				
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)$	−.03	−.07	−.23	−.33
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_3)$	.13	.31	.34	.91
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$	−.26	−.32	−.36	−.70
Nonmarital pregnancy rate:				
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)$	−1.00	−.81	−1.07	−.73
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_3)$	−.96	−.83	−.14	−.14
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$	−2.73*	−1.63	−2.09	−1.60
Overall pregnancy rate:				
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2)$	.74	.76	1.01	.93
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_3)$	.88	1.14	.69	.85
$(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$	.69	.56	.19	.19

Note.—Results are estimated with XTGLS (feasible generalized least squares) command in STATA version 13.

* $p \leq .10$.

** $p \leq .05$.

*** $p \leq .01$.

higher-than-average percentages of black women. This joint effect is also significant for Hispanic women, but here the decline is only about 1 per 100.

Table 10 indicates that the reduction in nonmarital births is not a function of any family cap-triggered abortion effect. We do not find a statistically significant abortion effect in any of the joint estimation models. In table 7, notwithstanding the correct signs of coefficients, none of the fixed effects models produced a significant, main effect of family caps on abortions.

The results for the joint effects of family caps on pregnancy rates (nonmarital and overall) reveal that in only one instance, the $(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$ model for black women, is the effect statistically significant. The nonmarital pregnancy rate declines in states that have family caps, Medicaid funding, and a higher percentage of black women by about 3 per 1,000.

In an effort to identify when pregnancy reduction supplanted abortion as the principal means through which family caps exerted an influence on nonmarital births, model specifications (4) and (5) for abortion rates were

reestimated incrementally (i.e., 1980–2000, 1980–2001, . . . , 1980–2010). The $(\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4)$ term from each of these regressions is shown in table 11, again using the more conservative XTGLS-FGLS estimates to compute the Lincom coefficients.

Results from this series of analysis indicate that after 2003 abortions were no longer a significant outcome of the joint effect of family caps, Medicaid funding, and above-average black population in the state. The abortion effect with respect to joint effect of (family cap \times Medicaid) and above-average percentage of Hispanic population, on the other hand, never reaches significance in these incremental analyses.

In summary, the results provide some evidence that family caps continue to reduce births 18 years after their implementation and that this reduction appears to be more a consequence of a reduction in pregnancies than of abortions, at least in the case of black women. In contrast with some earlier analyses, including our own, abortions no longer appear to make a significant contribution to the decline in nonmarital births, leaving us with the question of what accounts for the 1 per 1,000 discrepancy between the nonmarital pregnancy and birth rates indicated in this analysis.

Additional specification tests that involved the substitution of baseline AFDC/TANF cash benefits in lieu of state fixed effects, use of continuous and ordinarily ranked measures of black and Hispanic population, and omission of the quadratic term for time trend did not produce any markedly different results from those presented here. Regression analyses that

TABLE 11. Estimates of the Joint Effects of Family Caps, Medicaid Funding, and Racial Proportion ($\lambda_1 + \lambda_2 + \lambda_3 + \lambda_4$) on Abortion Rates from 2000 to 2010

Time Frame	Blacks	Hispanics
1980–2000	2.53**	.90
1980–2001	2.77**	.11
1980–2002	2.67**	.01
1980–2003	2.52**	-.14
1980–2004	.36	-.35
1980–2005	.29	-.36
1980–2006	-.04	-.61
1980–2007	-.09	-.43
1980–2008	-.22	-.36
1980–2009	-.22	-.40
1980–2010	-.26	-.36

Note.—Results are estimated with XTGLS (feasible generalized least square) command in STATA version 13.

** $p \leq .05$.

substituted time limits and an enhanced JOBS requirements for family caps in the sequential interaction modeling (1)–(5) did not produce evidence for the joint influence of either of these welfare reform measures.⁴

DISCUSSION

Despite years of controversy, family caps continue to be used in 16 states with the intention of decreasing the number of births to unmarried women on public assistance. This study provides some evidence for a longer-term effect of the policy in reducing these births, primarily in states where black women are overrepresented in the population and where medically necessary abortion is paid by state Medicaid funds. These findings are consistent with several more recent investigations of the family cap that indicate an influence on poor women's decisions to have children (Sabia 2008; Camasso and Jagannathan 2009; Hussey 2011). The magnitude of this birth effect, about 2 per 1,000, is lower than the 5–10 percent decline reported in earlier studies (Horvath-Rose and Peters 2001; Mach 2001; Jagannathan et al. 2004; Sabia 2008). The difference may reflect a long-run diminution of family cap effects; however, in our earlier work (Camasso and Jagannathan 2009), we also find a slightly more than 2 per 1,000 decline in nonmarital births in our analyses of effect through 2000. These findings are generally consistent with the expectations of rational choice theory and its more recent extensions (Becker 1960, 1981; Akerlof et al. 1996; Kane and Staiger 1996).

This research also provides some insight into the behavioral mechanisms underpinning family caps' influence on fertility and some evidence that this mechanism may have changed from abortion to more effective contraception use, measured as a decrease in nonmarital pregnancies. Unlike our earlier work (Camasso and Jagannathan 2009), which reports that the nonmarital birth decline is due to an increase in abortion, in this analysis, albeit with a considerably longer time series, we find that this decline can be linked primarily to a reduction in pregnancies. In this respect, the results are similar to those of Joseph Sabia (2008) and are consistent with analyses of national data conducted by AGI. Rachel Jones and Jenna Jerman (2014) and

4. While we used overall pregnancy rate as a counterfactual, another useful counterfactual could be provided by marital fertility rates, data that we did not collect.

Lawrence Finer and M. R. Zolna (2016) report that the number of unintended pregnancies averted by federally funded family planning programs increased by 15 percent from 2006 to 2010, with the use of Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) methods like intrauterine devices (IUDs) and injectable hormonal drugs figuring prominently in the increase. This dramatic increase in more effective LARC contraception, especially since 2008 (see Jones et al. 2008; Jones and Kooistra 2011; Solomon-Fears 2014), may make it easier for family caps to change a poor, black woman's cost calculus more effectively to (contraception < abortion < birth) in states where medically necessary abortions are available. The finding that this switch-over occurred in 2004 in states with family caps, and not as late as 2006–7 as AGI reports for the nation as a whole, may indicate the stimulating effect of the policy.

Our findings appear to indicate that the “technological shock” produced by low-cost abortion (Akerlof et al. 1996, 281) on poor black communities may have run its course in light of newer, lower-cost contraception technology. It could also signal the re-stigmatization of abortion that abortion historian Carol Joffe contends (Eckholm 2014). If real, it has the potential to change the current debate on the efficacy of family caps. If, indeed, the abortion effects of the policy were limited to the early stages of its implementation, when the consequences of the law's violation was either poorly understood, not taken seriously, or even defied (Camasso 2007), the conditions responsible for the common-cause opposition of pro-life and welfare rights groups would seem to have dissolved. States like Texas, which never adopted family caps because of the abortion specter, and others like Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Nebraska, which repealed caps due, in part, to research reporting significant abortion effects, may once again look to the policy as a viable approach to future welfare reform.

Documentation that a policy works differently in the long term than immediately after its implementation or over a limited period of time is not a new or surprising revelation. Examples of this phenomenon from the job training and welfare-to-work literatures are fairly common, which shows how early analysis can freeze the perception of a policy or program and, in the process, lead to the premature conclusion that the science is settled.

The results of this study reinforce the enduring importance of race for understanding any social policy seeking to influence women's fertility behavior. States with family caps tend to have AFDC/TANF populations with much higher proportions of black women than do states without family

caps, and the effects of family caps are confined largely to black women. These findings will, no doubt, do little to silence the voices claiming that the family cap is a form of welfare racism (Roberts 1997; Romero and Fuentes 2010; Gutiérrez 2013). The outcome of California's legal and legislative challenges to the CalWORKS Maximum Family Grant (MFG) due to claims of forced population control, overt racism, and exacerbation of family poverty could point the way to the future of the family cap. However, in cash-strapped states, a family cap policy that promises to reduce both nonmarital births and welfare caseloads without increasing abortions has the potential to garner wide public support.

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Workplace Experiences and Unemployment Insurance Claims: How Personal Relationships and the Structure of Work Shape Access to Public Benefits

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ABSTRACT What influences whether unemployed individuals take up Unemployment Insurance (UI)? For answers to this question, research on the take-up of public benefits has looked to the individual government social programs and their interactions. This study shows that workplace context also plays a prominent role in UI take-up. Using data from 45 qualitative interviews with a diverse group of workers who experienced job loss between 2007 and 2011, this study documents how the interpersonal climate at work prior to job loss, the environmental context at the time of job loss, and the structural arrangement of work interact with employee characteristics to impede or facilitate benefit access in a distinct manner. Although further research is necessary to fully understand employer behavior, the results suggest that changes to employer incentives and behavior have the potential to facilitate access to UI.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, typically less than two-thirds of workers who lose their jobs receive Unemployment Insurance (UI; Blank and Card 1991; Currie 2004; Burtless 2008; Bivens 2014). An even smaller proportion of low-earning workers receive these benefits (US Government Accountability Office 2006; Enchaustegui 2012; Michaelides and Mueser 2012). Quantitative research on the take-up of UI and other benefits has examined the dyadic relationship between the individual and the state from both sides, investigating associations between individual-level demographic characteristics and the propensity to claim benefits from the state as well as the relationship

between state-determined program factors and claimant behavior (Currie 2004; Nicoll 2015).

However, the funding structure of UI introduces a third party whose interest is tied to program participation: the employer. Because employers face higher taxes when more former employees claim benefits, they may be invested in the claiming behavior of their former employees. Former employees' decisions to seek out UI, in turn, may be influenced by workplace experiences. While the design of the UI program gives employers the ability to contest former employees' claims, the workplace context may also shape claiming behavior through more informal and less direct channels. For example, employees may be deterred from claiming UI if they fear that doing so will damage their relationships with former managers. They may fail to apply for benefits when their employers do not share information about their potential benefit eligibility. Nonstandard employment arrangements (e.g., part-time work, work through temporary agencies, or work classified as independent contracting) may lead workers to be ineligible for UI or to believe that they are ineligible. Existing literature has not considered the ways in which the workplace context could shape UI claims.

Drawing on qualitative interviews with 45 people in Michigan who lost their jobs between 2007 and 2011, I explore whether workplace experiences influence workers' claiming behavior, and if so, how. In my investigation, I consider three factors: the worker's interpersonal relationships with management prior to job loss, the environmental context at the time of job loss, and the structural arrangement of work. Understanding how workplace experiences shape UI claims-making holds the potential to contribute to the body of knowledge on the increasing proportion of labor market risk borne by workers and to stimulate research on how workplace institutions shape take-up of other benefits.

BACKGROUND

UI ELIGIBILITY

When workers separate from employment, the onus is on them to know of and apply for UI. To be eligible for benefits, a claimant must satisfy monetary eligibility criteria that are designed to ensure that claimants are well integrated into the labor force. These criteria include state-specific minimum earnings requirements and may include requirements about the distribution of earnings across a 4-quarter period. In 2012, in Michigan, the site of

this research, claimants were required to earn \$4,307 over 4 quarters with at least \$2,871 concentrated in 1 quarter.¹

Claimants must also satisfy nonmonetary eligibility criteria. They must have experienced job loss or a reduction in work hours and be searching for work. They must also have separated from work in a manner that makes them eligible for benefits, such as through lay-off (discharge for a reason other than disqualifying misconduct),² quitting for good personal cause,³ or quitting for cause attributable to the employer.⁴ As long as they remain available for additional work, claimants can work (at the same job or with a new employer) while receiving UI, but the benefit amount is reduced. For example, in Michigan, if wages are equal to or less than the benefit payment, the benefit amount is reduced so that the claimant's total income is less than or equal to 1.5 times their unadjusted benefit amount.

UI eligibility criteria, which vary by state, can be quite complex. Eligibility determinations can be ambiguous and are often contested by employers or the state,⁵ resulting in a dense body of state-specific regulations and

1. For more details on exceptions to this rule, additional monetary eligibility criteria, and how Michigan compares to other states, see <http://www.unemploymentinsurance.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2012/monetary.pdf>.

2. Intentional or reckless action directly harming the interest of the employer (e.g., embezzlement) that leads to work separation is considered disqualifying misconduct. Employees who lose their jobs because of disqualifying misconduct are ineligible for UI. In contrast, employees who are discharged from employment for a reason that does not directly harm the employer's interest are still eligible for UI. For example, an employer may dislike the color pink and institute a policy that employees may not wear the color pink to work. If an employee is then fired for wearing pink to work, this would be a discharge but not a discharge for disqualifying misconduct (wearing pink does not harm business).

3. Definitions of good personal cause vary by state, but they can include the need to care for a dependent, domestic violence, or relocating out of state because of a spouse's employment situation.

4. Cause attributable to the employer occurs when the employer creates a work situation in which a reasonable person would not continue to work. For example, if an employee quits because the employer did not provide heat in the workplace during winter in a cold climate and the employer did not remedy this problem at the employee's request, the quit would be for cause attributable to the employer.

5. To my knowledge, no publicly available data provide the frequency of employer contestation of claims. Using Department of Labor data from files ETA 207 and ETA 5159, however, it is possible to measure the number of separation determinations (which can serve as a proxy for employer contestation since separation determinations are typically issued after an employer contests a claim) and the number of initial claims. Looking at within-state separation determination rates from 1990 to 2014, I find that typical rates range from 10 percent to 30 percent.

case law. For example, in 2012, Michigan law restricted “good cause for leaving” to reasons connected to work,⁶ eligibility depended on where one was available to work and was contingent upon being available for full-time work, and employees of temporary service agencies were required to contact the agency upon completion of their assignment. Given this complexity, eligibility can be difficult to determine, even by experts.

Should the state rule, either independently or because of information submitted by the former employer, that the claimant is ineligible for benefits, benefits can be denied, at which point the claimant can initiate an appeals process. Employers can also appeal successful claims. An administrative law judge adjudicates the appeals process, and although these appeals are technically not trials, hearings involve many trial-like elements, including adversarial sides, the submission and presentation of evidence, and the interpretation of laws in the context of facts presented. While it can be difficult for claimants to secure counsel, the complexity of the law involved makes it useful to have an attorney present at these hearings (Emsellem and Halas 1995).

UI FINANCING

When workers do receive UI, benefits are financed by a federal-state partnership. Benefits are paid for through federal and state taxes on employers, although Patricia Anderson and Bruce Meyer (1997, 2000) show that a proportion of these costs are passed on to workers in the form of lower earnings and that these earnings penalties are regressive.⁷ State tax levels vary by employer according to the employer’s experience rating, which reflects the propensity of former employees to claim benefits and the magnitude of their claims, with higher levels of claims resulting in higher tax rates.⁸

The experience rating system is unique to the United States and is intended to apportion more of the program costs to employers who make

6. However, relocation to follow a military spouse who has been reassigned is considered an eligible separation. For more details on exceptions to this rule, additional nonmonetary eligibility criteria, and how Michigan compares to other states, see <http://www.unemploymentinsurance.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2012/nonmonetary.pdf>.

7. More work is needed to determine the proportion of costs borne by workers and the degree to which this varies by subgroup.

8. The formulae determining tax rates are complex. For more information, see Vroman (1998) or Stone and Chen (2014).

greater use of the UI system, and—importantly—to discourage employers from laying off workers. UI founders hoped to mitigate the possibility that employers would lay off workers who could have otherwise continued to be employed and by doing so take advantage of the government's willingness to foot the bill for these workers' basic needs. Thus, the action that the experience rating is intended to disincentivize is the lay-off, not the benefit receipt. However, in all states except Alaska, the employer is taxed on benefit receipt rather than changes to payroll. Thus, in addition to deterring layoffs, experience rating creates an incentive for employers to prevent laid-off employees from claiming benefits.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL PROGRAM TAKE-UP

The majority of existing work on social welfare and social insurance program take-up focuses on the state, the claimant, and the interaction between the two (see Currie 2004; Nicoll 2015). This work examines a broad range of government social programs, including cash assistance, disability insurance, state-provided medical insurance, food assistance, worker's compensation, and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

One line of inquiry delves into the relationship between state action and program participation. This research focuses on program structure and benefit generosity, finding that greater benefit amounts and fewer transaction costs make individuals more likely to participate in programs (Smith et al. 1998; Ellwood 1999; Currie et al. 2001; Zedlewski et al. 2003; Ratcliffe, Mc-Kernan, and Finegold 2008; Burstein et al. 2009; Nord and Prell 2011).

A second line of inquiry focuses on the claimant's demographic characteristics, finding that African Americans, women, single parents, English speakers, American citizens, low-educated individuals, and the young are more likely to take up benefits than those with other characteristics (Coe 1983; Ponza et al. 1999; Farrell et al. 2003; Algert, Reibel, and Renvall 2006; Caputo 2006; Burstein et al. 2009). However, many of these associations disappear when controlling for income, perceptions of stigma, and neighborhood, suggesting that income and community characteristics may drive patterns of program access (Coe 1983; Scholz 1994; Blank and Ruggles 1996; Ponza et al. 1999; Zedlewski 2002; Caputo 2006; Cody et al. 2008; Burstein et al. 2009).

Finally, a third line of inquiry examines the relationship between the state and the claimant. This work looks at interactions between claimants and

street-level bureaucrats. Michael Lipsky's (1980) foundational *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services* shows that low-level bureaucrats, such as case managers and administrative assistants, exert considerable discretion over the lives of claimants in their seemingly mundane work as agents of the state. John Gilliom's (2001) *Overseers of the Poor: Surveillance, Resistance, and the Limits of Privacy* and Celeste Watkins-Hayes's (2009) *The New Welfare Bureaucrats: Entanglements of Race, Class, and Policy Reform* show, respectively, the control that the state exerts over claimants through surveillance and the way in which street-level bureaucrats' individual identities shape their interactions with claimants of varying identity groups.

Beyond this literature, some program-specific studies examine the relationship between institutional practices and benefit take-up. For example, school and district practices shape enrollment in child nutrition programs (Gleason et al. 2003; Ribar and Haldeman 2013), emergency departments enroll children in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (Gordon, Emond, and Camargo 2005; Mahajan et al. 2005), and tax preparers may encourage take-up of the Earned Income Tax Credit, albeit at a cost (Maag 2005). Although employers have been shown to shape worker mobilization of rights, including family medical leave (Albiston 2005) and collective bargaining (Kleiner 2001), and while a well-developed body of work demonstrates that workers increasingly bear more labor market risk and employers bear less risk (Hacker 2006; Lambert 2008; Kalleberg 2011), there is no literature to my knowledge that examines the workplace institution's relationship to UI take-up from the former employee's perspective.

These extant lines of inquiry are instructive for understanding low rates of UI take-up and differences in take-up rates by demographic group. These bodies of research demonstrate that benefit size, transaction costs, household context, frontline worker practices, and institutional practices can affect who accesses benefits and how. Building from these literatures, this article argues that, in the case of UI, to more fully understand puzzles related to benefit take-up, an investigation of the way workplace environments shape UI claims-making behavior is merited.

UI TAKE-UP

Although countercyclical, rates of UI benefit receipt trended downward in the 1980s (Blank and Card 1991) and remained depressed until the onset of

the Great Recession (Valletta and Kuang 2010). On the eve of this massive downturn, only half of eligible individuals claimed UI (Fuller, Ravikumar, and Zhang 2012). Examinations of low levels of UI take-up have turned to transaction costs (Ebenstein and Stange 2010), the shifting demographic composition and regional distribution of the unemployed (Blank and Card 1991; Michaelides and Mueser 2012), and benefit level (Anderson and Meyer 1997). While benefit level and the regional distribution of unemployment are associated with take-up rates, much of the failure to take up UI remains unexplained.

Further, low-earning workers are less likely to successfully claim UI than their higher-earning counterparts (US Government Accountability Office 2006). Policy analysts have proposed that these workers' lower wages make it more difficult for them to satisfy monetary eligibility criteria (Stettner, Boushey, and Wenger 2005), and the federal government's main intervention intended to ameliorate disparities in rates of program-participation-targeted monetary eligibility (Gould-Werth and Shaefer 2013). Other scholars have suggested that nonmonetary requirements are more likely to cause low rates of eligibility, pointing to the fact that low-earning workers are disproportionately clustered in industries that avoid formal lay-offs, are more likely to be fired (and perhaps more likely to be fired for qualifying misconduct), and are more likely to quit work for family-related reasons (Holzer 2000; Rangarajan, Razafindrakoto, and Corson 2002; Fishman et al. 2003; O'Leary and Kline 2008; Shaefer 2010; Shaefer and Wu 2011). None of these potential explanations has conclusively been shown to account for the disparity in take-up and, to my knowledge, workplace context has not been considered in this literature.

While academic literature has not engaged the possibility that workplace structure shapes the UI-claiming process, business interests acknowledge this possibility but reject the idea that workplace structures are constructed in a manner that discourages UI-claiming to serve employer interests. The discourse in this arena paints employers as neutral agents of the state. Maurice Emsellem and Monica Halas (1995, 305) quote an employer-side UI attorney as saying:

I have personally supervised about 60,000 claims come through. . . . And any time that we go to a hearing, the number one feedback that I get from my employer community is . . . we wouldn't mind letting this guy have unemployment insurance benefits if he deserved it, but he doesn't deserve it. And

they're very convinced in their heart of hearts that he or she shouldn't deserve it and that's why they're fighting it.

Thus, the attorney advances the idea that the employer's role in the process is merely to alert the state that an ineligible worker is claiming benefits, acting as a proxy to advance state interests.

Although academic research largely overlooks workplace characteristics and the employer community suggests that employers merely act as conduits for the state who would hope to contest these claims, some experts believe that some workplaces present roadblocks along the route to successful claims by eligible claimants. For example, the US Advisory Council on Unemployment Compensation, a group convened under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 1991, writes that "some members of the council believe that experience rating causes employers to make excessive use of the system's appeal mechanism in an attempt to keep their experience-rated taxes as low as possible" (1996, 10). This belief is likely influenced largely by anecdotal evidence and practical experience, as no research is cited.

Although some experts believe that employers prevent eligible workers from claiming UI, the matter of whether workplace context affects people's UI claiming behavior is not settled. The mechanism through which employers are charged for UI claims is complex; thus, job losers and even employers may not be fully aware of UI policy provisions or may not fully consider them when structuring environments that facilitate or block claims. Paul Burgess and Stuart Low (1993) do find that experience rating may lead employers to time lay-offs to avoid experience rating charges, which suggests that employers are aware of these provisions and do modify their actions in response to experience rating incentives. Overall, however, the pathways through which workplace characteristics may affect UI take-up remain largely unexplored. Below, I take a first step in empirically examining these issues by employing rigorous qualitative methodology to explore how workplace contexts shape job losers' pursuit of UI benefits.

METHOD

The Metropolitan Detroit area provides a useful case for examining diverse individuals' experiences of unemployment. Home of the auto industry, Detroit was hard hit by the economic contraction of 2008, and while no single geographic area can stand in for the United States as a whole, Detroit

is illustrative of the experiences of many Americans in de-industrialized metropolitan areas. The Metropolitan Detroit area is home to individuals of varying income levels; according to the American Community Survey, between 2008 and 2012, the median household income in Detroit was \$26,995, while in the nearby suburb of Farmington Hills, it was two and a half times higher.

To identify respondents, I used a subsample from the Michigan Recession and Recovery Study (MRRS), a stratified random sample panel survey representative of working-age adults in the Metropolitan Detroit area. The MRRS completed three waves of hour-long, in-person interviews with adults ages 19–64 at baseline. Wave 1 took place in 2009–10, with 914 adults and a response rate of 82.8 percent. The next wave, in 2011, had a respondent retention rate of 93.9 percent, and a third wave of data collection in 2013 had a respondent retention rate of 90.8 percent. The survey gathered information about household demographics, income, education, health, benefit receipt, and a monthly employment calendar tracking respondent employment from 2007 through 2013.

My sample consists of respondents whose employment calendars showed steady work (at least 3 continuous months of employment, either full-time or part-time) followed by unemployment between 2008 and 2011. I pre-screened respondents to ensure that they separated from work due to circumstances outside of their control and wanted to work following their job loss. This prescreening process was not designed to exclude UI-ineligible individuals. Rather, it cast a wide net to capture individuals who fit the program's target population—dislocated workers unemployed through no fault of their own—according to the spirit of the law rather than according to technical eligibility criteria. For this reason, individuals who may have been UI ineligible due to working sporadic hours prior to work separation, seeking part-time work following job loss, or enrolling in training following work separation were included in the sample.⁹ This design choice results in an examination of how the program carries out its intended mission, rather than an evaluation of fidelity to program rules.

To ensure a diverse sample, I stratified the population of MRRS respondents into three education levels broken into two racial groups—black and

9. Some individuals with sporadic work may have been excluded from the sample due to not reporting part-time work for more than 2 consecutive months. Yet this strategy did successfully capture several respondents with sporadic work arrangements.

nonblack—and sampled randomly within these categories. I randomly selected 118 individuals for eligibility screening. Of those, 49 were ineligible, and 24 refused an interview, could not be located, or were not pursued for some other reason. My final sample of 45 includes 13 people without high school diplomas, 14 with high school diplomas but without bachelors degrees, and 18 with bachelors degrees or higher. In this sampling strategy, education level serves as the best available measure of earning history; though MRRS contains respondent earning history data, sorting respondents into discrete groups based upon actual earnings is challenging when earning trajectories are disrupted by spells of unemployment. Although my sample contains some low-educated respondents with high earnings and some high-educated respondents with low earnings, the strategy generated a wide range of earning histories and demographic characteristics (see appendix tables A1 and A2). This research does not attempt to generalize to a wider population. Drawing from a randomly sampled pool, however, means that my sample is more likely to be representative of the full UI target population than would be the case with convenience or snowball sampling.

I interviewed respondents between summer 2013 and summer 2014, from 2 to 6 years after the unemployment documented in the survey's second wave. Respondents recounted experiences of job separation with multiple employers, so these data contain descriptions of 78 job separations,¹⁰ each of which was analyzed separately (see appendix table A2). Because respondents shared stories of job losses that occurred both prior to and following the unemployment documented in wave 2 of the MRRS, the data include stories of job losses occurring from 10 months to 11 years prior to the interview. Ideally, data would be collected both prior to and immediately following job loss to minimize response bias based on the circumstances of termination and to improve recall. However, at the time of the interview, all respondents seemed to retain salient memories of their experiences of job loss and benefit claims, recounting specific details such as the order of events on the day they lost their jobs, conversations with former employers and loved ones, and specific dates and circumstances surrounding their termination, search for re-employment, and the lapse of UI.

10. In four instances, respondents described multiple similar job separations as a group without delineating clearly between separations. In these cases, these multiple separations are counted as a single separation, as I lack the data to precisely count the number of separations to which the respondent referred.

Respondents were compensated with \$80, and the modal interview lasted 2 hours, with a range of 1.5 to 4 hours. Most interviews took place in the respondent's home, though 11 respondents preferred to meet in public places (libraries, restaurants, and a health clinic). Two interviews were conducted over the phone because the respondents had relocated out of state following the job loss. The interviews elicited respondents' narratives in three areas: the job loss itself, financial and emotional coping, and interaction with government programs. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a team of professional transcriptionists.

The majority of the analysis presented here is drawn from narratives elicited in the third section of the interview, the portion designed to evoke descriptions of respondents' experiences with benefit claims. Data were analyzed using thematic coding, Dedoose software, and an iterative approach. The unit of analysis is the job separation as described by the respondent. While some hypotheses and research questions predated the analysis phase, themes were generated inductively by paying close attention to respondents' relationships with their former employers, respondents' experiences with the UI system, and respondents' answers to the following questions: "Did your employer ever mention unemployment benefits to you?" "Do you think your employer cared whether or not you claimed unemployment benefits?" and "We are interested in what people know about the UI system. Can you tell me what you know?"

The sample was drawn to include members of UI's target population who were both eligible and ineligible for benefits. Because UI statutes are complex and at times ambiguous, UI eligibility determinations rest on legal tests that are less clear-cut than is the case for other government programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). To understand the likely eligibility of each respondent, I consulted two attorneys: a national expert in UI benefits and an attorney who has represented hundreds of workers in UI cases in the jurisdiction where I conducted interviews. Most ambiguity around benefit eligibility stems from two questions: whether the work separation was involuntary and not for disqualifying misconduct and whether the claimant is available for work. These attorneys were able to point to statutes and case law to indicate whether, for example, an individual who is attending school is eligible for benefits or if refusing an opportunity for work in an inconvenient location disqualifies an individual from benefit receipt. These matters of law are not all settled, so in legally ambiguous

cases, the Michigan-based lawyer shared what percentage of his clients in similar cases were able to successfully claim benefits and even which local judges were likely to approve or deny benefits. It is likely that some respondents were not able or willing to share all the relevant information for determining benefit eligibility, but the level of certainty about the likelihood of benefit eligibility determined through this method is greater than the level of certainty garnered through typical survey measures. Information about eligibility was used to more deeply understand the pathways through which workplace context influenced eligibility and take-up in each work separation.

RESULTS

This study asks how workplace experiences enter into decisions about claiming UI. I investigate three dimensions of the workplace context: the interpersonal climate prior to job loss, the environmental context at the time of job loss, and the structural arrangement of work. As shown in table 1, each dimension is posited to influence individual-level UI-claims-making in a positive, neutral, or negative manner. Then, along each dimension, workplace context interacts with individual characteristics to shape UI-claiming outcomes.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGERS PRIOR TO JOB LOSS

While relationships with management are professional,¹¹ individuals also have personal relationships with their managers, supervisors, and employers that spill over the sterile bounds of professional workplace culture. These relationships can be messy and intimate. Some relationships predate

11. Respondents described relationships with employers, managers, and supervisors, all of which colored the context in which they did or did not levy a claim to benefits. These categories are distinct from one another: supervisors oversee daily operations within the firm but do not have the power to hire and fire; in addition to providing supervision, managers can hire and fire; and employers are the entities contractually obligated to provide compensation to employees. UI benefit claims directly affect employers through the UI tax structure, while managers and supervisors are agents of the employer. Throughout the text, when discussing an individual respondent's relationship with a supervisor, manager, or employer, I use the specific term. When speaking about broader experiences across respondents, I use the term "management" to encompass all three categories.

TABLE 1. Workplace Contextual Factors That Are Salient in Respondents' Narratives of Their Claiming Behavior

Reported Influence on Claiming Behavior	Reported Interpersonal Climate Pre-job Loss	Reported Environmental Context at Job Loss	Reported Structural Arrangement of Work
Positive	Antagonistic feelings, warm feelings	Facilitating environment	UI-supported
Neutral	Neutral feelings	Silent environment	Laissez-faire
Negative	Antagonistic feelings, warm feelings	Blocking environment	UI-resistant

employment; individuals connect to jobs through social networks (Eubanks and Wiczer 2014) and may be employed by friends and family members, or they may be embedded in social networks shared by management. Other personal relationships are developed on the job as individuals spend significant time each day with management. These relationships can develop into friendships, love affairs, or enmities that are not severed or neutralized with the end of formal employment. In this section, I categorize workers' feelings toward specific management personnel as warm or antagonistic.¹² Some respondents seemed to notice, interpret, and react to management incentives regarding UI benefit claims through the lens of these relationships. Before turning to my classification of respondent relationships, I use interview data to investigate how respondents perceived the consequences employers may face when former employees claim UI benefits. I surmise that, depending on the characteristics of a worker and his or her perceptions of the consequences of the UI claim for management, warm relationships can either encourage or discourage claims. The same is true for antagonistic relationships. While the directionality of the relationship varies, the crucial finding is that respondents reported that their personal relationships with former management shaped their claims to public benefits.

Respondent Knowledge of UI Funding Mechanisms

Some respondents professed little or no knowledge of the funding mechanisms that make UI receipt possible. These respondents hesitantly identified the government as providing UI funds or declined to hazard a guess about program financing. One respondent said, "I want to say government [funds it]. I don't know if it's Michigan government or if it's federally or if it's to-

12. In my analysis, I also classified some respondents as having neutral relationships with management that did not seem to influence their UI-claiming behavior. In this manuscript, however, I focus on relationships that appeared to shape UI-claiming behavior.

tally federally funded. I know the government has something to do with it." Others simply said "not exactly" when asked if they understood how the program was financed.

The majority of respondents, however, advanced some sort of opinion about program financing. Although the state is able to levy penalties against employers by changing the amount that employers contribute to state UI trust funds, some respondents advanced the idea that they, not their employers, paid UI taxes. Typical remarks included, "I paid into the system," "I've been putting in for it for years," or "I . . . personally paid." While these remarks do not reflect the mechanism through which UI payments are made (individuals do not personally pay; their employers are charged the tax), these remarks reflect the accurate idea that UI is a social insurance program designed for individuals who, as one respondent said, "earned the unemployment [benefits]" by working, in contrast to social welfare programs that are often characterized as serving the "undeserving" poor. Further, these views reflect the accurate perception that workers bear a portion of the economic incidence of the tax (Anderson and Meyer 2000).

At the same time, respondents also commonly identified employers as making UI contributions, describing UI as "money companies pay into the system" or "a process to where the company that you used to work for pays into this system." These seemingly contrasting views were sometimes held by the same individuals. For example, Danielle Darby,¹³ a mother and service worker, described UI as "a program obviously that we [workers] pay into so that if we ever lose our jobs we have . . . a certain amount of money," but also later she noted that her employer "paid part of that [unemployment tax] . . . paid, well, most of it." Even when respondents did not explicitly identify their employers as financially contributing to UI, at times their comments suggested that they sensed that their employers had a stake in their UI-claiming behavior.

In the absence of detailed information about program financing, respondents made deductions based on their observations of employer behavior. When asked about how benefits were financed, Ann Shaw, who worked in equipment sales for 30 years prior to being laid off, reasoned, "The employer must have something to do with it if he has a say-so [about who gets benefits]." Bonnie Adams, a floor manager at a discount retailer, remarked:

13. All respondent names are pseudonyms, and identifying details not central to the analysis have been modified.

I think that no company wants you to get unemployment because with me working at the discount store, it was a young lady who got fired and she was trying to get her unemployment, and they send you through a court process and all of that, so actually I think no company really wants you to get unemployment [benefits].

Yet, when I pressed on, asking if Ms. Adams had ideas about why the company might care if she received benefits, she answered simply, “No.”

Ben Adler, too, observed the fight over unemployment playing out as other coworkers were dismissed prior to his being laid off. The former programmer and UI benefit recipient remarked:

MR. ADLER: [My boss] would talk about it whenever someone would apply. And she would talk like . . . “Remember Heather?” [and I would say,] “Yeah, the one you threw out the door the other day, yeah.” [And my boss would respond:] “She filed for unemployment. Bitch.”

INTERVIEWER: Did you think about that when you filed for [UI]?

MR. ADLER: Yeah, I think about everything.

Not all employees reported observing employer behavior and sensing that their employers have an interest in UI claims. Some respondents indicated that they did not perceive their employers as having a stake in their claiming behavior, and others relayed that they did not know that the program existed. Yet, in the absence of accurate technical information about UI financing and the experience rating system’s implications for employers, respondents seemed to gain information from observing how their employers reacted to their former colleagues’ benefit claims. They used this information to make guesses about UI program financing, to relate stories about how their employers seemed to perceive past benefit claims, and to speculate about how their employers might perceive their own benefit claims. These respondents’ remarks imply that full understanding of the program is not necessary to understand that employers have incentives related to their employees’ claiming behavior.

Warm Relationships

Information about employers’ incentives to prevent UI claims is not interpreted in a neutral framework. I interviewed respondents who worked for friends, family members, and other members of their preexisting social net-

works. Danielle Darby described a particularly personal work separation: she had worked for her father's company as an administrative assistant. When business slowed during the 2008 economic contraction, Ms. Darby told her father that he should lay her off. I asked Ms. Darby if she received UI when her father followed her advice and handed her a pink slip. Both attuned to her father's needs and the experience-rated nature of UI taxes, Ms. Darby responded: "I didn't even apply . . . because of his company not doing so well. Again, they paid part of [the UI] . . . well paid most of it. And I didn't want to do that to him because I knew that financially he was struggling and that was my reason for leaving in the first place, so why would I leave and then go get him for. . . . (*laughs*) I mean if that was the case I would have just stayed." Protective of her father, and her warm relationship with him, Ms. Darby forwent benefits.

Sometimes employment is granted as a personal favor. Mark Remington, a father who suffered from bipolar disorder, explained that after he was jailed for assault, a "friend gave me a job working as an assistant manager at his car washes. . . . That's how I was able to get out [of jail] on work release." When Mr. Remington later claimed UI after being laid off from a subsequent job, "The guy at the car wash called me up and said, 'dude, I can't believe you're doing this to me.' I said, 'I didn't know they were going to take it from you, I thought they would take it from the big box store I worked for and I'm sorry.'" Mr. Remington felt no internal conflict when he thought his claiming behavior had implications for a big company with "such deep pockets," but he felt more conflicted about the consequences faced by his friend toward whom he felt warmly and who had provided him with employment in a time of need.

In contrast, medical assistant Valerie Clayton's warm relationship with her employer left her feeling unambiguously positive about claiming benefits. She remarked, "With Dr. Yeltzin, I wasn't worried about him [denying my benefits]. Because I had been knowing these people." Recounting their shared history, Ms. Clayton provided many examples of warmth:

I mean, hell, they knew me before my daughter was even married. . . . We went to barbeques at their home, they came to my house. I mean they were family to me. I've got two fur coats [that they gave me]. They had twin sons . . . so I was like a daughter they never had. . . . They looked out for me above and beyond. . . . And my girls' birthdays. . . . And when my husband passed [I had been working part-time]. But [Mrs. Yeltzin] told me, well Valerie, I want you to

maintain 40 hours since your husband is gone [and you'll need the work]. You can either come in the office or you can do it at home.

While Mark Remington's warm relationship with his employer made him feel conflicted about claiming benefits, the warmth Ms. Clayton felt made her confident in her claim.

Antagonistic Relationships

Respondents also described how antagonistic relationships with their employers shaped their decisions around UI claims-making. When she separated from a waitressing job because of a conflict with a coworker who harassed her, Danielle Darby chose not to apply for UI because she was unsure of her eligibility and because "I didn't want anything else to do with that restaurant. . . . I didn't want any more bad blood or any more fighting with them through . . . the unemployment agency." When her already antagonistic relationship with the restaurant ended badly over her harassment, Ms. Darby wanted to sever it totally—she didn't want a benefit claim to link her back to the toxic work environment.

In contrast, while Thomas Rudaj also experienced harassment at work, this antagonism spurred him forward in his claim. When, despite Mr. Rudaj's appeals for help from his employer, Mr. Rudaj's manager called him names in front of customers, threw screwdrivers in anger, and referred to Mr. Rudaj as a "stinking greasy fucking foreigner," Mr. Rudaj "knew it wouldn't be worth it [to continue working] so I just said forget it. . . . I'm not going to wait for her [to fire me so I quit], and I filed for unemployment." The state denied Mr. Rudaj's claim, and he appealed, making the case that he quit for good cause that was attributable to the employer. During our interview, Mr. Rudaj produced the final determination, and as I read the judge's words aloud, "The claimant need not bear frustration and abuse in an employment relationship where he is belittled, attacked, and called names," Mr. Rudaj interjected "Thank you" and clapped as I concluded, "This type of language used by the claimant's supervisor would cause a reasonable average or otherwise qualified worker to give up his employment. The claimant has shown by a preponderance of evidence that his voluntary leaving was certainly with good cause attributable to the employer."

"Certainly with good cause," Mr. Rudaj echoed. While Ms. Darby's antagonistic relationship with management generated such a strong desire to separate herself from her former workplace that she chose not to pursue a

UI claim, the antagonism Mr. Rudaj felt at work persisted into the legal arena following his separation from work. Unlike Ms. Darby, he seemed pleased to continue this battle following work separation, especially given the favorable outcome of his UI case.

There are several mechanisms through which personal relationships may affect a potential UI claimant's behavior. People who have warm relationships with their former employers may forgo a claim to spare their former employer a tax penalty. On the other hand, people may interpret a warm relationship to mean that their former employer will want them to receive income support through UI, even if it comes with a penalty to the employer.¹⁴ Following work separation, antagonism may lead one to cut all ties with management, including the tie created through a UI claim, or it may result in a vengeful claim. Personal and situational characteristics may also interact with the nature of the relationship to influence claiming behavior. Although the dynamics are complex, some respondents described ways in which their personal relationships with their employers influenced their decisions to claim public benefits. When weighing potential courses of action regarding UI claims, people—especially those who suspect that UI claims have consequences for employers—may consider the complex and personal social context in which they were embedded on the job.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF JOB LOSS

Respondents reported varying ways in which the environmental context at the time of their job loss affected their UI-claiming behavior.¹⁵ I categorized the environments respondents described into three types: facilitating, silent, and blocking. These three types of environments, described in detail below, seem to interact with individual characteristics to fashion UI-claiming behavior.

14. Because of the complex nature of the experience rating schedule, some UI claims do not trigger a tax increase for employers. Some potential claimants may be aware of this, though no respondents interviewed for this study mentioned knowledge of this feature of the tax schedule.

15. Note that each respondent reports the individual context he or she experienced at job loss. It is likely that, when it comes to environmental context at job loss, there is intrafirm diversity. While one employee may experience a facilitating environment at job loss, another employee at the same firm may experience a blocking environment. Data limitations—my respondents were not employed at the same firms—preclude me from investigating intrafirm variation. I discuss here the context that each individual employee finds himself or herself in at the time of job separation, rather than providing a more global description of the firm context.

Facilitating Environment

I classify job separations as taking place in a facilitating environment when respondents reported that their employers took action that assisted them in seeking UI after job loss. Eleven separations were classified as taking place in a facilitating environment; in 9 of the 11 separations, respondents received UI.

Linda Bruno liked her office job; “It was in a nice place, and the people were really nice, and I liked everybody I worked with; and I worked there for a long time.” When she was laid off in 2009, she felt betrayed. She described the process of learning about her lay-off in a group meeting and packing up the cubicle she had occupied for 10 years, a common trope in the narratives of other respondents describing facilitating environments:

I got down to this big conference room. There was probably about 18 other employees in there with me and we all knew. We all had a feeling. What a horrible feeling . . . and so then they just like kind of came right out and told us. . . . I felt really rejected. . . . I cried. . . . I just felt so hurt by it like you know because I had been a loyal employee for all these years. . . . And then after they got done in the meeting, they [had] a person from personnel go to each person’s desk and make us pack our desk right in front of them, as if we were like gonna steal their stuff or something. . . . It was horrible. It was a really bad day in my life. You want to know something? I don’t think I ever unpacked that box. I never unpacked that box because it hurt. It was very hard.

Like other respondents, Ms. Bruno had a complex reaction to her lay-off. Although she felt betrayed, rejected, and hurt—“I remember thinking it’s hard to believe it’s not personal”—she also felt that on some level her employer cared about her: “We were like a family there. There were a lot of really good workers there that you know stayed there for years. . . . I think it was difficult for them to do it. I mean I really do. I think it was hard on them to have to lay off people, but they had to.” Perhaps because she perceived that her employer cared about her, Ms. Bruno believed that her employer wanted her and her fellow employees to receive UI benefits. In fact, she reports:

When they actually laid us off, at that meeting, they kind of gave us a little like heads up on what to do . . . who we needed to call. . . . I had my little unemployment folder with my letter that I was laid off. And so I just kind of followed whatever they told us to do and you know it was very organized.

With clear instructions provided by her employer—"whatever they told me to do, I did"—Ms. Bruno successfully navigated the UI application process and claimed benefits. After 4 months of unemployment, she followed her long-term plan to enter college for nursing. She continued to claim benefits, which came in handy when her husband lost his job a year later. The couple cut back on spending, put some expenses on credit cards, and managed to make their mortgage payments, though payments were late. At the time of the interview, Ms. Bruno had secured a job that paid more than the one she had lost, though her husband was still underemployed. The family was rebuilding their credit and returning to their old consumption habits, and Ms. Bruno remarked that she now appreciated "how much it means to have a job."

While each respondent's relationship with his or her former employer was unique, Ms. Bruno's experience unfolded similarly to the other 10 work separations that took place in what I classify as facilitating environments. In each case, a representative of the employer met with the employee and explained where and how to claim benefits. Some respondents were given documentation explaining the nature of their job loss for the UI Agency and were informed that their employers would not contest their right to benefits. In some cases, employers paid severance and brought in outside firms to facilitate the job search and rehiring process for former employees. Of the 11 job separations in environments categorized as facilitating, seven respondents successfully claimed benefits, one chose an early retirement package over an unemployment package, and one was informed by the UI Agency that he was ineligible for benefits because he had only been working for 4 months.

Silent Environment

The majority of job separations took place in environments in which the employees' claims to UI benefits were neither facilitated nor blocked, which I classify as silent environments. Thirty-one separations occurred in silent environments. Of them, 12 resulted in successful benefit claims.

Like Linda Bruno, Barbara Silverman felt betrayed when she lost her job. Fifty-five-year-old Ms. Silverman held a bachelor's degree in education. But, for 10 years prior to her job loss, she had worked as the administrative assistant in a small construction company. In 2007, a new owner came to the company, and Ms. Silverman served as his guide. She explains:

He had come in as the owner of this company not knowing a lot about it. I mean he knew some but not much, and I really helped him tremendously. . . . He was kind of a young . . . kind of weird. He had his own . . . small little own home repair company, a real small one, but he didn't know anything about how to run a union one because there's different things you have to do for the union and the other one he just ran out of his house.

Although Ms. Silverman tried to deploy her 10 years of experience at the company to assist the owner ("I was really trying to help him out, and I told him I would come in on a Saturday to help get him caught up on different things"), she felt betrayed when "he called me after work on a Friday. . . . He goes I'm not going to need you anymore. . . . So I was, you know, really stunned and said okay. And then he said to me, but I hope you can come in and help me out with a few things, and I'll pay you really good." Ms. Silverman went in, was paid \$100 to help straighten things up before her departure, and never heard from the owner again. Reflecting on her service to the company and the help she had provided the employer, Ms. Silverman remarked, "For him to go do this to me; it almost felt like a stab in the back, I took it real personal."

Although she was shocked by her job loss, and although her employer did not mention UI to her, Ms. Silverman "knew a little bit about it from some of the guys that had worked [in construction at her job], because they would have to go on unemployment when the weather was bad and they weren't able to work." Ms. Silverman contacted the UI agency and went to a workforce center to apply for benefits. She was not happy to be there:

It's . . . real depressing when you see all of these people, and you think, oh my God, all of these people are out of work, and all of these people are trying to find a job, and it's like, you know, I shouldn't be here. . . . There was no reason, there was nothing I did wrong, you know I shouldn't have to be going through this.

Yet she successfully navigated the bureaucracy and began receiving UI benefits.

When I asked Ms. Silverman if she thought her employer wanted her to get benefits, she replied, "I think he probably wanted me to . . . you know, he

didn't fight it at all." Although Ms. Silverman did not find herself in an explicitly facilitating environment, she seemed to take the lack of resistance in her environment as an implicit condoning of her benefit receipt. Ms. Silverman and her husband applied these benefit payments to their regular spending while Ms. Silverman searched for work and cobbled babysitting jobs together for extra income. She and her husband managed to meet their expenses without pulling money from their retirement savings, and eventually Ms. Silverman was re-employed as a preschool teacher. Things are back to normal in the Silverman household, though Ms. Silverman still holds a modicum of bitterness toward her former employer, who ran the business into the ground in the years after her departure.

While Ms. Silverman and several other similar respondents seemed to take the silent environment as a tacit acceptance of benefit claims, for Cecelia Doyle, the absence of information about UI benefits meant that she did not know that benefits were available. Although she was young—26 at the time of the interview—Ms. Doyle had worked a variety of low-wage jobs ("I worked at a clothing factory, I worked at a toy store, and I had a couple of restaurant jobs") and had taken a break from the labor force for health reasons before landing a steady job in adult foster care. Ms. Doyle liked her coworkers and built strong relationships with clients. She had been at the center for 3 years when, near the end of the workday, her boss called her into her office and let her know that because client enrollment was down she had to be laid off. As had been the case with her previous jobs, at the time of termination, there was no mention of UI. Feeling "a little surprised and hurt," Ms. Doyle went home to tell her family of four, for whom she was the sole source of income, that she had lost her job.

When I asked Ms. Doyle if she had considered applying for UI after losing her job, she responded, "I sure didn't. I went right and applied for cash assistance at the Department of Human Services." She elaborated on this choice, saying:

I don't think back then I knew as much about [UI] as the little bit that I do know now. . . . I didn't apply for unemployment 'cause . . . I knew bits and pieces, but I didn't know the specifics, and it was my negligence and me not going out on my own to find out more information. . . . I just went straight to the Department of Human Services. . . . That's where my family told me to go apply, so I didn't even think about, really think about [UI].

In the absence of information about UI, like three other respondents, Ms. Doyle turned to the cash assistance program that was more familiar to her (also referred to as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF] or “welfare”). In Ms. Doyle’s case, this action proved costly: her cash benefits were time-limited, and after 2 years her benefits ceased.¹⁶ Although Ms. Doyle searched diligently for work, employment was hard to come by in her urban neighborhood. She received a job offer, but it was in an outlying suburb, and the cost of transportation and the need to care for her young children made taking this job an untenable option. With only the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) to aid them, Ms. Doyle, her partner, and their two children left their home and moved in with Ms. Doyle’s father, where they continued to live at the time of the interview.

Ms. Silverman and Ms. Doyle experienced similarly silent workplace environmental contexts at the time of their job loss: they reported hearing nothing, positive or negative, about UI. Yet, Ms. Silverman and 11 other respondents reporting a job separation in a silent environment successfully claimed benefits. These individuals reported having previously lost jobs in facilitating environments or reported that they were enmeshed in social networks that were aware of these benefits. In the face of silent contexts, they relied on personal information. In contrast, in the case of Ms. Doyle’s separation and 15 other separations that occurred largely among service-sector and other low-wage workers, respondents indicated that they lacked the necessary information to make a claim, though 12 of these separations seemed to qualify for UI.¹⁷

16. At the time of Ms. Doyle’s job loss, she had already claimed cash assistance for 3 years in her lifetime, leaving only 2 years on her TANF clock, which she exhausted. Following TANF exhaustion, she was no longer eligible for UI because at that point her work history was too distant. At the time of her job loss, extended UI benefits under Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08) were available, and some UI claimants received benefits for 99 weeks. Had Ms. Doyle turned to UI, she potentially could have received these benefits for 99 weeks, and—after failing to find work—turned to the 2 remaining years of TANF and perhaps maintained her housing.

17. In three separations in silent environments, respondents had information about UI but chose not to pursue a claim. In two cases, the respondent hoped to preserve a relationship with an employer by not claiming and in the other the respondent chose to pursue a Worker’s Compensation claim rather than a UI claim. Additionally, in one separation that took place in a silent environment that I count as lacking necessary information, the respondent was aware of

Blocking Environment

I categorized all work separations in which respondents described an employer actively deterring them from receiving UI as occurring in a blocking environment. Nine job separations were described as taking place in environments that I classify as blocking; in six of those separations, respondents overcame their employers' challenge to successfully claim UI.

The circumstances surrounding Jacques Beauchamp's termination were dramatic. After being accused of a crime, he was escorted away from his security guard post by policemen bearing a warrant for his arrest. When the dust settled, it was clear that 25-year-old Mr. Beauchamp was innocent. He had a clear alibi: he had been at work at the time when the crime was committed. Although his name was cleared, Mr. Beauchamp's employers did not want him at work anymore: "I got called into the main place for where they dispatch you at and that's where they let me go. . . . One boss said I can have the job back, but when I heard from the main boss, they denied." When I asked Mr. Beauchamp how he responded, he replied, "Oh, I threatened them with a lawsuit [and then] I just left because I got tired of all of the BS, and I went job searching somewhere else, um, because there was no way I was getting that job back."

Although Mr. Beauchamp never actually sued his former employer, their battle played out over different ground: UI. Mr. Beauchamp's aunt, who worked for the state, informed him that he was entitled to benefits, and he was surprised, "because I like never collected unemployment in my life. Usually you get fired [and that's it: you] get fired." Mr. Beauchamp's aunt helped him apply, but he received a letter in the mail saying that his employer was contesting his right to benefits and that he needed to appear in court. When I asked Mr. Beauchamp if it was easy to understand the letter, he responded, "Oh it was easy to understand is you ain't getting nothing, (laughter) you're screwed basically." But Mr. Beauchamp wasn't screwed. With the help of his aunt and a family friend who was a lawyer, Mr. Beauchamp gathered evidence to show that he had not harmed the interest of his employer prior to work separation, and he appeared in court. Mr. Beauchamp's former employer tried to make a case against him:

Everything she tried to put against me, and it wasn't working in her behalf.

She'd say I didn't try to get my job back, which I had telephone proof from the

the UI program but reported that she was depressed and could not draw on the information she had about UI to claim benefits without a nudge or assistance.

phone bills, and [I] brought another guy in saying that [I told him] I did try to get my job back. . . . No matter what she tried to salvage, what she tried to word it, it just wasn't fitting right.

In the end, however, Mr. Beauchamp triumphed: "The judge flat out told them that I was more than eligible for unemployment."

The benefits came in handy as Mr. Beauchamp's spell of unemployment stretched on, punctuated only by odd jobs and a few sporadic days of work through a temp agency. When his UI ended, Mr. Beauchamp, who shared a mobile home with his mother, struggled to pay bills and eat an adequate amount. After another year of hardship, in a moment of apparent serendipity, Mr. Beauchamp passed a mechanic's shop with a "help wanted" sign:

And I walked in there, and they hired me right on the spot. . . . I just asked are you hiring, and he asked if I was certified in certain things. I said yes. And he said you got tools? I said yes. And he said how long could you be here. I said an hour, and I was back, and I've been working ever since. . . . It felt good [to] stand back on my own two feet again.

At the time of the interview, Mr. Beauchamp had been employed for 7 months.

Of the nine separations that occurred in the context of blocking environments, six followed similar trajectories to Mr. Beauchamp's story: respondents pursued claims and received benefits. I did not interview any respondents who pursued claims to the end of the legal process in a blocking environment and failed to receive benefits. However, respondents recounted three separations in which they applied for benefits but then found themselves being blocked and chose simply not to pursue their claims.

One such worker was Gregg Williams, a 45-year-old father. Mr. Williams had worked in a variety of low-wage jobs—operating a forklift, dry cleaning, picking up temp work here and there—and had landed steady work in a grocery store in his neighborhood, "stock[ing], setting ads . . . sometimes I set displays that was on the sales, unloaded the trucks." Although his manager "was to me one of the best managers I ever had," Mr. Williams described the employer as "kind of shady." The employer decided to close the store location in the city of Detroit and open a new store in the suburbs. Mr. Williams was offered a job in the new location, but without a driver's license or adequate public transit he was unable to make the commute. He describes his actions following his separation from employment:

My first thing was to make sure I had my W-2 forms and what-not so I could file for my unemployment, because when he offered me the job, I . . . explained it to him where I lived, it would probably take me some time you know to get up the money to get my license back and to be able to come out there. . . . So that kind of made me say, well I might as well just try to . . . file this paperwork for my unemployment at least until I can . . . get back on my feet and get find me something else. I said so at least I have some money coming in.

The process of claiming the benefit, however, did not go smoothly for Mr. Williams:

[The UI agency] sent me the papers because you know your employers have to sign your papers for you to receive it . . . first he gotta sign it, then it has to be determined how much you know you be getting paid, and he had to okay that. So if he don't sign it to say he's okay with you drawing unemployment, you have to go back and start it over again.

When Mr. Williams was initially denied his benefits, he was “kind of discouraged,” but he sent in the paperwork to continue to pursue the claim, hopeful that he would be successful:

[My employer] know how I am. . . . He know how I work. . . . Even if I was to get it, it wouldn't be for long. . . . It would just be until I find another job, and if I find another job before I start getting it, I wouldn't pursue it. . . . I figured he shouldn't have no problem with that.

But again at the second stage of the contestation process, the claim was denied. Mr. Williams chose not to pursue benefits any further. “I never tried again after that,” he remarked, “I could have re-applied [continued the process of contestation], but I just said I’d rather just spend my time and energy on trying to find me work and keep some kind of constant work you know to keep [my family] afloat.” Unfortunately, without a driver’s license, constant work proved difficult to find. At the time of the interview, Mr. Williams was piecing together informal work repairing cars and houses. When I asked Mr. Williams how he would describe UI to someone who had never heard of the program, he had a piece of advice to add for the neophyte:

Don’t get on your employer’s bad side. (*Laughter.*) Because they will deny you. See a lot of times if you’re working for somebody, if that person don’t like you they can—and not saying that you won’t get it—but they can deny it,

withhold it, where the process will take a lot longer. . . . They can distract you and keep you going back and forth to court till you just give up and say, “Well okay, I’m gonna leave it alone.” So the best thing is to make sure you [have a good relationship with your employer]. And not just think that you have a good relationship, but make sure.

Here a variety of factors converged. Mr. Williams weighed the hassle of pursuing a claim against the value of the benefits and rejected the pursuit of benefits. He preferred to focus on a job search rather than on navigating bureaucracy or fighting his employer. At the same time, his employer’s action set this bureaucratic obstacle in his way, and this obstacle seemed to stop his claim short.¹⁸

When Mr. Beauchamp was blocked, he marshaled his resources (his knowledgeable aunt, his pro bono lawyer) and fought back. But for Mr. Williams, who may have lacked access to these types of resources, the response to nearly identical contexts was not to fight but to walk away. His comments indicate that he was left feeling that in the future the onus was on him to adjust his behavior so that his next employer might create a different workplace context. Although the sample size (3) is too small to draw definitive conclusions, one other respondent who walked away from a claim expressed the same sentiment as Mr. Williams.

THE STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF WORK

The UI system was designed in the 1930s, when typical work arrangements were markedly different than they are today. Since the 1970s, part-time, contingent, subcontracted, and nonunionized work has increased in prominence (Kalleberg 2011), and the UI system has not kept pace with these changes (Ben-Ishai, McHugh, and McKenna 2015).

Today’s economy is characterized by a variety of structural arrangements of work that may shape workers’ eligibility for and propensity to claim UI. While some work arrangements are *laissez-faire*,¹⁹ their structure has no obvious connection to the UI system, others are arranged in ways that seem to

18. The attorneys with whom I consulted suggested that this is a common practice. They described some large human resources subcontractors as following a practice of automatically contesting any UI claim levied by any former employee in order to generate bureaucratic hassle and stop UI receipt by claimants who are not persistent.

19. While in my analysis I classified some workplace architectures as *laissez-faire*, in this article, I focus on workplace structures that appear to shape UI-claiming behavior.

intentionally encourage or discourage claims. Some respondents described workplaces that seemed to use UI as a supporting beam: in these contemporary workplaces, formal temporary lay-offs remained an integral feature of the way work was organized, and the use of UI seemed to support this feature. Based on respondents' reports, I classify these workplaces as having UI-supported architecture. Other respondents described workplaces with very different scaffolding. Work was arranged in such a way that individuals were either ineligible or believed themselves to be ineligible for UI. Based on respondents' reports, I classify these workplaces as having UI-resistant architecture.

UI-Supported Architecture

UI-supported architecture was not common in my sample. Of the total 78 separations reported by respondents, only five took place in workplaces with architecture that incorporated UI as a structural feature. When employers sit at the maximum UI experience rating, additional UI claims cannot further increase their tax rates. By building the maximum tax rate into the business models, companies can strategically use temporary lay-offs: when a company has little need for a worker, the worker can claim UI benefits and have the state cover a portion of his or her expenses, allowing the firm to retain its workforce while waiting for the slack period to cease. This architecture is perhaps antiquated, more common in factories of another era. Yet some factory, construction, and other seasonal work continues to rely on UI to support its workforce when demand is low or seasonal conditions preclude work from taking place.

From 2004 to 2009, Wendy Campbell was part of a five-person team assembling car frames at a plant. Using a torch gun, she assisted her coworkers as they assembled the vehicles for which Detroit, the Motor City, is famous. During this time, Ms. Campbell experienced periods of temporary unemployment. When car companies would "take time off and changeover [to new models, making] more parts and stuff for them," Ms. Campbell would be laid off. In a given year, "it's usually two shutdowns; one like around . . . June, July, and then it would be one in December. So if you're out for a week or two, you call . . . and they will give you unemployment." During this period, management "would tell us that we were eligible to get [UI] while we're on shutdown; we had a union, so union reps would tell us that too." Based on Ms. Campbell's report, it seems that shutdowns helped to keep the plant running smoothly and that Ms. Campbell's employer retained its workforce during these moments of slack in part by allowing them to claim UI in

order to meet their basic needs until the plant was ready to begin production again.

Factory work is not the only type of employment that may rest on UI for support. From 2008 to 2011, Brett Teruel performed sundry seasonal work as part of a crew employed by his small, blue-collar suburb's city government, "from landscaping to tree trimming to working on water main breaks, I mean I did a little bit of everything, but like the main thing it was summer help I guess you would call it. Yeah I did that for a few years." This job spanned an important transition in Mr. Teruel's life: in its initial months he felt young and carefree, but by 2011, he "had kids I had to worry about too, and you know I had to make sure that my [UI] was taking care of them first and foremost."

Mr. Teruel appreciated the support UI provided when the city did not require his services and other jobs were hard to come by. This support kept his labor available to the city every summer until control of the mayor's office changed, and—as Mr. Teruel's fiancée described—the mayor "did not hire Brett even though he was the highest seniority of the seasonable part-timers; she chose to hire some of her own relatives and keep them, and they were brand new to the city of seasonal help in that year." Although Mr. Teruel appreciated UI, he found his interactions with the accompanying bureaucracy frustrating. His claims were delayed and once denied on a technicality that some legal experts believe is improper. He remarked:

I mean it seems like I get investigated or sent something in the mail every time I had to collect [UI], it seemed like it was a struggle. Like it's like why are you guys looking at me, it's like everything's here in black and white. I work a seasonal job, you know give me my damn unemployment and quit you know quit putting me off for three, four extra weeks.

Although his receipt of UI was not smooth or easy, Mr. Teruel—along with Ms. Campbell and one other respondent—found that by claiming the UI that was part of the architecture of his work environment, he was able to meet his basic needs until conditions changed and his employer called him back to work.

UI-Resistant Architecture

While UI may have been integral to the structural arrangement of Ms. Campbell's and Mr. Teruel's work, other respondents relayed stories of 23 work separations that took place within the context of workplace struc-

tures that seemed to make it more difficult for former employees to access UI. The specific type of architecture varied: 3 separations took place in the context of self-employment; 2 separations were in the context of under-the-table work; 9 were separations from temporary agencies; 4 were separations in which the respondent was classified as an independent contractor, perhaps improperly; and 3 separations were from seasonal or sporadic work. Of the 23 separations that occurred in the context of workplaces built on UI-resistant blueprints, 5 resulted in successful UI claims.

At the time of her interview, Ms. Hutchins, a woman with a master's degree who struggled to find work in her field, had been employed at the same temp firm for 6 years. Her work history was a pastiche composed of stretches of unemployment between jobs sorting mail, entering data, and answering phones. Despite her frequent unemployment, Ms. Hutchins had never claimed UI:

I don't think I've ever been able [to claim UI] 'cause I think you have to work [for a long stretch of time] . . . and see by me working for [temporary] agencies. . . . You know, you have to work so long [to be eligible], and usually I have . . . either the assignment ends before 6 months, or before I would be eligible, so I'd never even try to get [the benefit].

Like other respondents, Ms. Hutchins believed that a certain amount of consecutive employment with a single employer was a condition for UI eligibility. While Ms. Hutchins cited 6 months, other respondents believed that 60 days were required. These respondents were correct in their assertion that one must demonstrate labor force attachment to qualify for UI, but attachment is measured by dollars earned. In Michigan at the time when most interviews were conducted, UI recipients were required to have earned \$4,307 over 4 quarters, with at least \$2,807 in 1 quarter. With wages averaging \$1,000 monthly, Ms. Hutchins likely qualified for UI during some of her many work separations, yet she believed herself to be consistently ineligible.²⁰

20. Workers in nonstandard work arrangements may also believe themselves to be eligible for UI but choose not to claim it in order to maintain their relationship with management. For example, after Danielle Darby's seasonal employment at a department store ended, she "didn't want to cause the issues with them [so] if I ever wanted to go back . . . for the holidays I didn't want them to remember me as somebody (short laugh) who put for [UI] afterwards. . . . Yeah, unfortunately it just didn't seem like a very wise thing to do. [And] if I had another job interview I [wanted them to be] a good reference for me."

Like other respondents who lacked information about UI, Ms. Hutchins thought more carefully about the benefits as she responded to my series of questions about UI than she had previously. As she thought it over, she concluded that perhaps she could have applied for UI—"you would think I would be able to"—but she remained adamant that even had she been mistaken about her eligibility, benefits were not necessary in her case:

Now . . . things are better. But even when things weren't, you know when I was getting less and less jobs or when I wasn't getting that many jobs, I just relied on my grandmother to help me until I either got my school loans refund or [a job]. You know I never really thought about it . . . because I think early on, I didn't think I was able to get it anyway.²¹

For Ms. Hutchins, the combination of her workplace architecture, her low level of awareness of the UI program, her belief in her own ineligibility, and support from her grandmother with whom she lived helps explain why she did not apply for UI and does not regret it. Although Ms. Hutchins wished that she could have contributed more to the household during tough times, given that her grandmother provided for many relatives—"things [can be] harder when it's one person carrying the load"—she also saw it as "okay because that's just life, so I don't get stressed out about that." Ms. Hutchins saw her period of underemployment in a firm with what I classify as UI-resistant architecture as a waystation in her career path during which, "it's natural to work . . . jobs for a certain amount of time and then be without one" and without UI. She felt that if she were to "work permanent jobs and lose them, that would be different. It would be a whole different ballgame."

In contrast, Reggie Greene saw the permanent and temporary work in his employment history as similar—just part of his "shuffle" to make ends meet. Of the five successful claims levied in environments with UI-resistant architecture, two belonged to 32-year-old Mr. Greene, who seemed savvier about UI than the majority of other respondents. Mr. Greene, whose attachment to the labor force "fluctuates, it's nothing consistent [there is no consistent work available]," described how he goes about claiming UI when he gets laid off from landscaping work:

21. Ms. Hutchins's belief "early on" of her ineligibility stems from her recollection of a direct message from her employer: "I think I asked my agency one time uh, but they told me that you have to have worked for so many hours, and I didn't have those hours at the time. So that was one reason why I didn't [apply]."

It's a process where you call your unemployment agency. You give them your job information and everything, and you see if your job is in a certain bracket, and if you are eligible to get unemployment from that job. A lot of jobs purposely stay out of that bracket, you know so it depends on the job.

Mr. Greene described a complex set of mechanisms through which even employers "in the bracket" work in the "gray areas" of the law to avoid having their employees collect benefits:

Like, [the landscaping company I worked for], doing their seasonal work, um, if you're working consistently through the spring, summer, and fall, and their down time is the winter, then you can get unemployment benefits, unless they're planning on getting rid of you or eliminating a shift. . . [But] I done seen them do this: hire you and then before you get your 90 days to be able to receive [some amount of] unemployment, release [lay-off the employee] . . . release. 'Cause somebody is always in need of a job, so they constantly can do that all the time. So you can imagine how much money they're saving.

He described how when employers discovered that their former employees were collecting benefits, he thought that "they may call you to work one or two days or three days once they figure that out. Like 'oh-oh, we'll come out cheaper if we just let him work instead of getting [UI]. If we let him work three or four days we'll come out cheaper.'" He observed management slowly decreasing employees' hours and suspected that this was so that they would not meet monetary eligibility criteria at lay-off, "slowly tapered off, downsized. They know how to manipulate. That's every business owner. I mean that's their job to try to make as much money and keep as much money in their pocket as possible." Echoing several respondents' sentiments, Mr. Greene remarked, "Your employer never wants you to get unemployment, ever. So he manipulates you and the unemployment center to save him some money: the smart guy on top." Mr. Greene, a young, low-educated black man who came of age in Detroit during the era of de-unionization, reported workplaces that seem buttressed with UI-resistant architecture and said that he has never found himself in a facilitating environment at the time of job loss.

Out of the 23 work separations that took place within workplaces with UI-resistant architecture, only 5 resulted in successful benefit claims.

Respondents who worked for temporary agencies or who amassed a sufficient number of hours to meet monetary eligibility criteria despite the sporadic nature of their work arrangements were likely eligible for benefits yet perceived themselves to be ineligible. Respondents who were paid under the table, self-employed, or classified as independent contractors labored in workplaces with architecture that likely left them ineligible for benefits. In some cases, legal or bureaucratic machinations could potentially circumvent this architecture (e.g., a respondent who was self-employed received a \$7,000 UI benefit from the state and, while no respondents classified as independent contractors fought this classification, they may have had legal grounds to do so), but the majority of respondents reported being unaware of these options or seemed to have accepted their place in the market, removed from UI's protection against the loss of income associated with involuntary unemployment.

DISCUSSION

This study has presented the voices of workers describing the ways in which their workplace contexts affected their pursuit and receipt of UI benefits. While current scholarship on UI has not given serious treatment to the ways in which workplace context may affect take-up, this study draws on rich qualitative data to trace how three dimensions of the workplace context matter for workers' claim-making behavior. Because some workers believe that management has a stake in their UI-claiming behavior at work, the interpersonal climate they experience at work prior to job loss can influence their interest in levying a claim to benefits. At job loss, some workers find themselves in an environment that is silent regarding UI claims, while others find themselves in environments that facilitate or block these claims. Finally, the very nature of work arrangements can shape a worker's claiming behavior. While some workplaces do not appear to be designed with an eye toward UI, workplaces with UI-supported architecture—formal, temporary lay-offs built into the business model—may rely on UI as an essential feature of their work arrangements. In contrast, workplaces with more UI-resistant architecture, characterized by nonstandard work arrangements (e.g., part-time work, work through temporary agencies, or work classified as independent contracting) can leave workers ineligible for UI or with the perception that they are ineligible. Across all dimensions, the pathways through which workplace context influences take-up are complex.

Although beyond the scope of this study, occupational and individual characteristics are also likely to interact with the workplace context to shape benefit take-up. Workers with different demographic and personal characteristics, as well as workers in distinct occupational positions, likely respond differently to similar interpersonal relationships with managers, similar workplace environments at the time of job separation, and similar workplace structures. Further, workers in these distinct groups may have different experiences in the workplace. Management may form deeper personal relationships with employees who have similar demographic profiles to themselves. Management also has the power to create environments that facilitate some workers' claims while blocking those of other workers. Further, firms can have different structural arrangements for workers in different occupational groups (e.g., having a different employment relationship with workers in professional, white-collar jobs versus workers in subcontracted positions, such as janitorial staff), and workers' demographic characteristics may also affect which workplace contexts they find themselves in: low-educated and racial minority workers are more likely to have non-standard work arrangements (Presser and Ward 2011; Government Accounting Office 2015). Future research could explore the ways in which occupational and demographic characteristics interact with the workplace context to affect UI benefit claims.

Of course the workplace environment does not manifest from thin air. Further work should also investigate how employer behavior shapes the workplace context and how experience rating shapes employer behavior. This article suggests that experience-rated UI taxes may create a perverse incentive for employers to discourage benefit claims, and this suggestion should be tested with ethnography, employer interviews, and quantitative research exploiting variation in experience rating across states. This mixed-methods approach would shed light on how and why employers decide to block, ignore, or facilitate UI claims; the factors they consider as they build workplace structures; whether their behavior is consistent across employees; asymmetries of power in the workplace; and the magnitude of any detected effects.

This article speaks to the larger body of research on the mismatch between contemporary structures of work and the social safety net. The UI system was designed to assist individuals with regular, full-time jobs who experience formal temporary lay-offs, rather than workers in nonstandard work arrangements (Blaustein 1993; Katznelson 2013). Although some bar-

riers to UI access have been reduced,²² this original mismatch has grown as more employers have “passed the buck” onto (disproportionately low-wage) workers through the use of nonstandard work arrangements that expose workers to the vagaries of the market without the insulation of UI (Lambert 2008). Advocates have called for updating state UI legislation to recognize the changing architecture of workplaces, including volatile scheduling practices (see Ben-Ishai et al. 2015).

The federal government has been concerned with the low level of UI benefit take-up, and in 2009, it incentivized a suite of state-level changes to UI eligibility with \$7 billion of recovery act financing. The central reform in this suite, the use of an alternative method for calculating monetary eligibility with the hopes of increasing rates of UI eligibility, has been found to be only mildly effective at increasing rates of benefit take-up (Gould-Werth and Shaefer 2013). Perhaps by broadening the scope of the examination to include the workplace context, more effective interventions can be designed. For example, as the results presented here suggest, when workers who are unaware of UI or hold misconceptions about their eligibility for UI lose jobs, they do not claim UI unless their former employer or someone in their network makes them aware of their potential eligibility for the benefit. COBRA (a public-private health insurance continuation program) mitigates this issue by requiring employers to notify employees of their COBRA eligibility in writing at the time of work separation. The lack of UI program knowledge among some study respondents suggests that mandating employers to notify former employees of their benefit eligibility at the time of job loss could be an important step to increasing rates of application, and hence receipt, among this group. As respondents described feeling emotionally overwhelmed at the moment of job loss, which could make new information difficult to absorb, notification should be perhaps provided twice: once at the time of separation and again mailed to the home of the worker.

22. In 1935, only employers with eight or more workers were covered; now employers with one or more workers are covered; one can now file for UI by telephone or online rather than in person; and the UI modernization provisions included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act incentivized states to change the formulae used to determine monetary eligibility, allow part-time workers to seek part-time work and receive benefits, and allow workers who quit for compelling family reasons to receive benefits (see <http://www.dol.gov/ocia/pdf/75th-anniversary-summary-final.pdf> and http://nelp.3cdn.net/ebbff6219d7fb6acb4_ksm6bcaec.pdf), though many states failed to adopt these changes.

The importance of this study's central finding extends past UI to other government social programs. While institutions have received some treatment as mediators of social benefit receipt, they have not been incorporated into dominant models of take-up, which tend to focus on demographic characteristics, benefit size, and transaction costs. The findings presented in this article serve as a call to bring institutions into our models. Further, this study suggests that the employment institution, specifically, may influence benefit take-up and should be examined more centrally as it relates to other government social programs. This could include examining, for example, low-wage employers' practices encouraging the take-up of SNAP and Medicaid, the proposed expansion of experience rating into the realm of disability insurance, the employer option to opt out of traditional worker's compensation in Texas and Oklahoma, and women's claims to contraceptives under the Affordable Care Act, among others.

CONCLUSION

Claiming public benefits is often thought of as a dyadic interaction between a person and the state. Yet, in the case of UI, workers who lose their jobs do not simply and individually levy claims on the state: their behavior is shaped by the workplace institution. Workers' access to UI may depend as much on their personal relationships with supervisors as with their transactions with street-level bureaucrats, on information provided by their employer rather than information provided by the government, and on the structure of their work as much as their level of labor force participation.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1. Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Age	Education
Ann Shaw	White	Female	61	Less than high school
Athalia Gordon	Black	Female	41	High school diploma
Barbara Silverman	White	Female	58	College degree
Ben Adler	White	Male	35	College degree
Bert Taylor	Black	Male	50	College degree
Bonnie Adams	Black	Female	32	Less than high school
Brett Teruel	White	Male	37	High school diploma
Cecelia Doyle	Black	Female	26	High school diploma
Charles Safford	Black	Male	47	College degree
Craig Hendricks	White	Male	32	High school diploma
Danielle Darby	White	Female	31	High school diploma
Dareon Voss	Black	Male	27	Less than high school
Debra Reed	Black	Female	35	Less than high school
Edward Jones	Black	Male	30	High school diploma
Frank Morning	Black	Male	52	High school diploma
Fred Henninger	White	Male	61	High school diploma
Gary Richards	White	Male	53	Less than high school
Gregg Williams	Black	Male	46	Less than high school
Jacques Beauchamp	White	Male	28	Less than high school
Jane Parks	Black	Female	53	College degree
Jeanette Brown	Black	Female	51	Less than high school
Jenny Chilcott	White	Female	54	High school diploma
Kathleen Barthel	White	Female	45	College degree
Kayla Hutchins	Black	Female	31	College degree
Keith Kazanski	White	Male	53	College degree
Krystal Stamper	White	Female	26	Less than high school
Lastelle McCommon	Black	Female	49	College degree
Linda Bruno	White	Female	49	College degree
M.T. Carson	Black	Male	55	High school diploma
Mark Remington	White	Male	42	High school diploma
Matt Schuster	White	Male	28	College degree
Melissa Johnson	White	Female	34	High school diploma
Patricia J. Henderson	Black	Female	44	High school diploma
Paul Hadad	White ^a	Male	59	High school diploma
Reggie Greene	Black	Male	32	Less than high school
Sean McCormick	White	Male	63	College degree
Sherry Fuller	Black	Female	28	High school diploma
Shoquana Davis	Black	Female	52	College degree
Tad Smith	White	Male	57	College degree
Teresa Woodall	Black	Female	49	College Degree
Thomas Rudaj	White	Male	41	Less than high school
Tim Jones	White	Male	58	College degree
Travis Rorke	Black	Male	58	College degree
Valerie Clayton	Black	Female	49	High school diploma
Wendy Campbell	Black	Female	46	Less than high school

^a Lebanese respondent.

TABLE A2. Firm and Occupational Characteristics of Jobs from Which Respondents Separated Involuntarily

Pseudonym	Employer	Occupation	Job Tenure	Pay Status	Earnings	Full-Time/Part-Time
Ann Shaw	Car dealership, multiple sites in the region	Operations manager	21 years, "I was probably the highest seniority in operations"	Annual, salaried		Full-time
Athalia Gordon	Manufacturing company, four locations nationwide (multiple temporary separations and one permanent separation)	Assembly	9 years	Hourly	\$18.50/hour	Full-time
Barbara Silverman	Construction firm, small and family-owned	Administrative assistant	10 years, "I was there for about 10 years"	Hourly	\$16/hour	Part-time, 30 hours/week
Ben Adler	Ad agency, 12 employees prior to lay-off	Creative manager	1 year, "about a year, just shy"	Hourly	More than at his other jobs	Full-time, "I was putting in 65 and 70 hours a week"
Ben Adler	Small public relations firm	Creative manager	2.5 years	Hourly	\$15/hour, <\$30,000/year, "I really haven't been making what I should be making"	"I would say I was a part-time employee. . . . [I was] full-time, [but] there were months there where we didn't have clients, and they would sort of put us on furlough"
Bert Taylor	Large nonprofit community center	Pool supervisor	3 years		\$27,000–\$28,000/year	Part-time
Bert Taylor	National union	Program coordinator	4 months		\$55,000/year	"Classified as part-time even though I was averaging close to 40 hours a week"
Bonnie Adams	National fast-food franchise	Food worker	7 years, "6, 7 years"	Hourly		Full-time
Bonnie Adams	National fast-food franchise	Food worker	1 month	Hourly		Part-time, 32–35 hours/week

Brett Teruel	City government for a small suburb (multiple seasonal separations)	Landscaper	Several years, seasonal work over	Hourly	\$9/hour	Part-time
Brett Teruel	Industrial services firm	Hazardous material remover	6 months	Hourly	\$17/hour	Full-time
Cecilia Doyle	Adult day care, three employees prior to lay-off	Caretaker	3 years, "I worked there about 3 years"			Full-time
Charles Safford	Charter school	Fourth-grade teacher	1 year	Salaried	\$7.50/hour	Full-time
Craig Hendricks	Interstate supermarket chain	Seller/stocker	2 years	Hourly	\$7.50/hour	Full-time
Craig Hendricks	Local handyman business	Lawn/dumpster service	"Like a couple of years"	Hourly	\$10/hour	Full-time
Craig Hendricks	National temporary agency	Construction/miscellaneous	1.5 years, different temporary positions	Hourly	< \$10/hour	Part-time
Danielle Darby	Accounting firm, let six employees go after tax season	Retail employee	Around 3 months, worked for one holiday season, 10 years, "off and on"	Hourly	"They pay really crappy"	Full-time, "I worked like 60 hours a week"
Danielle Darby	Department store, part of a national, well-known chain	Administrative assistant			"Can give you all the hours you need"	Full-time, then part-time
Danielle Darby	Equipment manufacturer, 28 employees	Hostess	1.5 years	Hourly	\$9/hour	Part-time, "I was only working like 21 hours a week"
Danielle Darby	Large family-owned restaurant with one location	Staffing agency	Temporary / odd jobs	Per paper	"You get paid like 6 cents, 7 cents a paper," "200 and something through the week"	part-time
Danielle Darby	Newspaper delivery company	Newspaper carrier	3 or more years			Part-time, "It might take about 4 hours to deliver all the papers the whole route"
Dareen Voss						
Debra Reed	In-home daycare facility	Daycare provider	About 1 year	Hourly	\$9/hour	Part-time
Debra Reed	Local nonprofit daycare center	Teacher's aide				Full-time

Table A2 (continued)

Pseudonym	Employer	Occupation	Job Tenure	Pay Status	Earnings	Full-Time/Part-Time
Edward Jones	Large automotive supply company	Auto parts quality inspector, sub-contracted	Hourly	\$42 – \$540/month	Part-time, sporadic employment	
Frank Morning	Casino in large luxury hotel	Musician		“\$100 or \$150 in 4 hours”	Part-time, “I was like a contractor. They call you and hire you for like, ‘Okay, we got 4 days this month and, here’s the days so you know, um, 5 days this month, and here’s the days, here’s the time”	
					Sufficient hours	
Frank Morning	Local large fine-dining restaurant	Waiter	25 years, promoted from houseman to busboy to waiter	Mainly tips	“\$80 on a slow day” (in tips), “a good night, you leave out of here with \$300 in your pocket”	
					“After working the whole day, you might not even make \$60” (in tips)	
Frank Morning	Restaurant staffing agency	Temporary catering staff	“A short time”	Mainly tips	Part-time	
Fred Henniger	Big three auto company	Contract programmer	6 years			
Gary Richards	Trucking company, 15 drivers prior to lay-off	Truck driver	15 years	Hourly	\$18.36/hour	Full-time
Gregg Williams	Temporary agency	Temporary worker				
Gregg Williams	Grocery store, two locations, locally owned	Supermarket worker	6 months, “I was working there for what, maybe about 6 months”	Hourly		Part-time
Jacques Beauchamp	National shipping firm	Security guard	“I worked there for about 2 years”			

Jacques Beauchamp	Temporary agency	“Mechanical work”	Full-time
Jane Parks	National bank	Systems analyst	Full-time
Jeannette Brown	State government	Housekeeper	Salaried
Jenny Chilcott	IT company	Customer service representative	Hourly
Jenny Chilcott	IT company	Customer service representative	Full-time
Kathleen Barthel	In-home daycare facility, self-employed	Child-care provider	Part-time, “32 hours a week”
Kayla Hutchins	Temporary agency	Clerical	Full-time, sporadic
Keith Kazanski	Self-employed	Consultant	Full-time
Krystal Stamper	Chain restaurant, 15 locations in the region	Waitress	Full-time
Krystal Stamper	Corner liquor store	Cashier	Part-time
Krystal Stamper	Fast casual restaurant in a national chain	Waitress	Part-time
Krystal Stamper	Small family restaurant	Waitress	Part-time, “couple of hours”
Lastelle McCammon Linda Bruno	State government Hospital	Program evaluator Administrative assistant	Around \$100 overall, “made a little bit of extra money”
M. T. Carson	“Little small factory,” 35 employees	Light assembly worker	\$50,000/year
M. T. Carson M.T. Carson	Auto part manufacturer Supplier to big three company	Automated welder Foundry worker	“I was making half of the money, and I was working double hard”
Mark Remington	Big box store, national chain	Salesperson	Full-time
Mark Remington	Car wash, local	Assistant manager	Full-time
			Less than at the big box store

Table A2 (continued)

Pseudonym	Employer	Occupation	Job Tenure	Pay Status	Earnings	Full-Time/Part-Time
Mark Remington	Home improvement sales	Inspector / salesperson	Around 5 months		\$50/sale, paid on a 1099	Part-time
Mark Remington	Roofing company I	Estimator	3 years		Paid on a 1099	
Mark Remington	Roofing company II					
Mark Remington	Sales	Salesperson	2 months		“Didn’t get any sales”	Part-time
Matt Schuster	Big three auto company	Engineer	Less than 1 year		\$22.5/hour, \$3,600/month	Full-time
Melissa Johnson	Design company, 70 employees prior to lay-off	Staff accountant	8 years	Salaried	around \$47,000/year	Full-time
Patricia J. Henderson	National gas supplier	Cylinder prep/computer work	13 years	Hourly	\$16/hour	Full-time
Paul Hadad	Self-employed	Carpenter	19 years			Part-time
Reggie Green	Landscaping firm, “so many different supervisors . . . so many different crews”	Landscape	One season	By job		Part-time
Reggie Green	Temporary agency	Temporary worker/odd jobs	Temporary			
Sean McCormick	Big three auto company, parts division	Cost estimator	Almost 20 years, “I was the senior estimator, “237 months”	Salaried	\$94,000/year	Full-time
Sherry Fuller	Adult foster care agency, more than 10 employees	Home health aide	2 years, on and off			Full-time
Sherry Fuller	Healthcare company	Chart auditor	1 year, during 2012	Hourly	\$14/hour, “it paid well”	Full-time

Sherry Fuller	Hospital	Visiting nurse	Hourly	\$10–\$11.75/hour
Shoquiana Davis	Federal government	Field agent	Salaried	\$4,000/month
Tad Smith	Recreation facilities, 316 employees	Owner		\$140,000/year
Teresa Woodall	Auto company	Adjudicator	Over 3 years	More than minimum wage
Thomas Rudaj	Pawn shop	Pawnbroker/gemologist		\$50,000/year, \$96/ weekly
Tim Jones	Auto company	Computer programmer	Almost 27 years	Around \$90,000/year
Travis Rorke	Large corporate document management firm, over 700 people were downsized	Electronics technician	12 years	Aalaried
Valerie Clayton	Physical rehabilitation center	Medical office coordinator	Everyone is saying I'm overqualified"	Hourly \$7/hour
				Full-time, "overworked," overstressed,"
				"coming in at 6 in the morning, an hour earlier on my own time"
Valerie Clayton	Small specialty clinic	Unit clerk	16 years with the doctor, "medical field all my life"	\$17/hour
Wendy Campbell	Manufacturing company	Factory worker	4.5 years	Full-time
Wendy Campbell	Temporary agency	Temporary worker	11 days, "I worked a temporary job for about 11 days"	Part-time

Note.—This table was constructed using information that arose naturally over the course of each semi-structured interview. Cells are left blank where respondents' narratives did not convey the corresponding information.

NOTE

Alix Gould-Werth is a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research. She is broadly interested in social programs and policies that are designed to improve the economic circumstances of poor Americans. Her work has focused on safety net programs, including Unemployment Insurance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and barriers to employment, including lack of access to transportation. This research was funded by the National Science Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation (through a National Poverty Center grant), and the University of Michigan's Centers for Non-Profit Management and Diversity in Public Policy. The author thanks Kristin Seefeldt, Sarah Burgard, Luke Shaefer, Sandy Levitsky, Karyn Lacy, Rick McHugh, Mike Evangelist, Steve Gray, Jessica Garrick, Vin Fusaro, Leah Strong, Amaanat Gill, Claire Bobst, Morgan Hobbs, Ilean Baskerville, and the anonymous reviewers and editors of *Social Service Review* for their contributions to this work.

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Book Reviews

Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South. By Talitha L. LeFlouria. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. 280. \$24.95 (paper).

The long-standing, deeply dysfunctional relationship between race and the criminal justice system in the United States is one that scholars analyze, pundits pontificate on, politicians downplay, and activists mobilize around. Gender, however, often goes unremarked upon in these conversations. In recent years, unnecessarily violent encounters between white male police officers and young black women recorded at pool parties and in public schools brought this issue to the fore of the nation's consciousness. The mysterious 2015 death of Sandra Bland while in police custody in Waller County, Texas, likewise riveted the nation's attention, illuminating the disturbing intersections between race, gender, violence, and state power. A social media campaign, #SayHerName, emerged to raise awareness about the ever-growing list of black women who died during their encounters with law enforcement. Against this backdrop, Talitha LeFlouria's award-winning book, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*, reads as a tour de force—a gripping history that insists on speaking the names and remembering the lives of long-forgotten working-class black women caught up in the violent, exploitative system of convict labor in post-emancipation Georgia.

A masterful storyteller, LeFlouria draws on newspapers, court records, investigative reports, state and federal government documents, and physician's notes to trace the experiences of black female convicts who toiled mercilessly in lease camps, state prison farms, and chain gangs across Georgia. In the wake of military defeat and the advent of black freedom, racial tensions, anxieties, and hostilities skyrocketed in the postbellum South as whites feared the loss of both their unpaid labor force and their social dominance. As black men faced brutal lynchings during the period that historian Rayford Logan called the nadir of black life in the United States, black women also

endured daily insults, intimidation, and violent sexual assaults at the hands of groups like the Ku Klux Klan. By the close of the nineteenth century, pseudoscientific discourses cast criminality as “an irredeemable race trait” and “distinguished the Negro woman as a criminal by genetic design—a ‘true monster’ prone to commit barbaric acts of cruelty” (45). In this atmosphere, black women in Georgia were swept into the penal system for crimes ranging from the most common charge of larceny to what the author terms “social crimes,” like bootlegging, gambling, and prostitution, to a smaller number of violent crimes, like murder, infanticide, and assault. As LeFlouria makes clear, scientific racism combined with greed and a “paranoid fixation with the overthrow of freedpeople’s social, political, and economic liberties” to fuel the emergence of the southern convict lease system (59).

Within this system, LeFlouria illuminates how black female felons were critical to “the construction of New South modernity,” even as they “confronted the ever present threat of physical and sexual violence” (62). The first generation of female convicts (1868–80) had all been born into slavery and were initially leased out to the contracting firm Grant, Alexander, and Company for railroad labor (69). Unlike other states, where convicts conformed to traditional gender divisions of labor, black women in Georgia’s system mined coal; made iron, bricks, and brooms; cleared land as lumberjacks; operated sawmills; provided agricultural labor; and constructed and maintained public roads. Whether they were leased to outside contractors for profit or directly exploited by the state, LeFlouria compellingly demonstrates that black female convicts’ long-overlooked labor made them “a fundamental asset in the development of Georgia’s postbellum industries” as producers and modernizers in the state’s inexorable shift toward a New South agro-industrial economy (6). A key example was Georgia’s first experiment with state-run penal farms in Milledgeville in the first decade of the twentieth century. The labor of approximately 75 black and 5 white female convicts sustained 157 “aged, infirm, and diseased” male prisoners and 19 juvenile boys under 15 years of age (148). Female convicts were also the first to incorporate an industrial logic into agriculture and diversify crops, presaging a similar turn throughout the state after World War I.

In addition to examining the economic significance of their labor, *Chained in Silence* also delves into the daily lives of Georgia’s black female convicts and illuminates how their experiences fundamentally challenge standard historical interpretations of convict labor. Most strikingly, LeFlouria points out how the inclusion of gender reveals the fallacy of under-

standing southern convict labor as simply a new form of slavery. In the antebellum years, she explains, enslaved women's reproductive labor increased the slave population and slaveholder wealth, giving motherhood "a commercial value and purpose." In postbellum Georgia, on the other hand, "the hypervaluation of imprisoned black women's productive labor forcefully undermined their role as mothers" to the point that lessees and the state shunned female convicts' children, who were often conceived in rape (98). In one horrific example, LeFlouria recounts the case of Eliza Randall—imprisoned for life for murdering her physically and sexually abusive father—who plotted to escape by seducing a white guard, Miles Bollen. Randall became pregnant with Bollen's child but nevertheless still attempted to abscond. Quickly caught by authorities, she was sent to Camp Heardmont, where she gave birth and where her newborn was "taken to the river and thrown in" (133). This atrocious tale epitomizes how LeFlouria's extensive research sheds light on entirely new layers of the convict laborer experience.

By moving beyond a unidimensional focus on either race or gender and, instead, employing an intersectional analysis of race, gender, class, and sexuality, *Chained in Silence* poignantly captures the central role of deeply gendered and sexualized forms of racial violence in black female convicts' lives. LeFlouria is most successful at conveying these multiple, overlapping forms of abuse when she tells the gut-wrenching stories of individual women that emerge from her careful reading of the fragmented historical record. Ella Gamble, for instance, was sentenced to life imprisonment for poisoning her employer in 1884 and spent 20 years working in a cook squad, hauling slabs at a brick plant, stitching brooms, and tilling fields. She lived through physical and sexual abuse, multiple "injurious childbirths," and "medical neglect" before being pardoned in the final days of her life to relieve the state of the burden of her care (61). In addition to sexualized forms of punishment as well as outright rape and sexual abuse, LeFlouria also argues that more subtle forms of racialized, gendered violence occurred in lease camps, prison farms, and chain gangs. Specifically, she describes a phenomenon that she calls "social rape"—a form of physical and psychological oppression caused by the forced de-feminization and masculinization of black women that "stripped [them] of their choice and right to be socially recognized as women" (88). Being forced to wear men's striped shirts, trousers, and brogans as they performed labor that was considered to be men's work denied black female convicts their gender identity in a way that paralleled attacks

on black womanhood in the larger postbellum society. Drawing on the late Stephanie Camp's poignant scholarship on the bodily politics of everyday resistance, LeFlouria points out that women often responded to this particular form of violence by burning the masculine clothes, an act that "was as much an expression of . . . dissatisfaction toward ritual abuse and defeminization as it was a way to undercut the lessee's assets" (90–91).

Chained in Silence is painstakingly researched, beautifully written, and certain to become a classic in the literature on labor, race and the criminal justice system, as well as black women's history. As with any academic text intended to expand conversation and not limit it, however, there are areas that LeFlouria could have further developed. In the introduction, she suggests that "medical terror" and the ways in which white medical authority operated in the postbellum South would have a more prominent place in the text than it perhaps did. Despite rich discussions of the biological fantasies of scientific racism, the disgraceful obstetrical and gynecological care that female convicts received, and the effects of hard labor, abuse, and infectious disease on women's health, a more sustained analysis of the relationship between the state, biopower, and the discipline of unruly bodies would have added yet another layer to this powerful history. This theme likely would have emerged more clearly with a more thorough contextualization of professional medicine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including a nod to the many overlapping institutional spaces of the era. Another slight shortcoming was the book's modest epilogue. While it reiterated major arguments and mapped out new areas of inquiry for future research, it stood out as a bit too tentative for such a powerful study. This was an ideal place to drive home the point that the deep injustices faced by these first generations of black women in Georgia's convict labor system are part of a genealogy that connects them not only to their enslaved foremothers but also to the black women who, today, continue to experience dangerous encounters with law enforcement in the United States. Ultimately, however, by breaking the silence around their history—by saying the names and telling the stories of women like Eliza Randall, Ella Gamble, Carrie Massie, Mattie Crawford, and many others—Talitha LeFlouria's *Chained in Silence* is a poignant but subtle reminder of this continuity and stands as a testament to the power of intersectional historical research.

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Crisis Cities: Disaster and Development in New York and New Orleans. By Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. 352. \$105.00 (cloth); \$26.95 (paper).

Natural and manmade disasters are global phenomena that leave in their wake loss of life, destruction of property, and remnants of a community's identity. Disasters also exacerbate existing social, economic, and political conditions to create further vulnerability and expose communities to higher rates of hazard risk. Much of the academic literature on these large-scale catastrophes addresses issues of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, with the latter posing both short- and long-term consequences. To that end, *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Development in New York and New Orleans* focuses on issues of long-term community redevelopment in two highly recognized US urban centers. The framework for this comparative analysis places particular emphasis on a privatized disaster recovery paradigm driven by free-market forces along with economic and political incentives that arguably fail to mitigate future hazard risk and instead serve to exacerbate vulnerability.

Crisis Cities is a rigorous comparative study organized through seven highly informative chapters. As its title purports, the book studies the cities of New York and New Orleans given their exposure to two horrific disasters, one manmade and the other conjured from nature, that sent shock waves across the nation. The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, which brought down the World Trade Center and took the lives of nearly 3,000 people, was a catastrophic event that also affected a number of neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan surrounding the epicenter of the destruction. In comparison, on August 25, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi and Louisiana Gulf Coast regions and breached the levy system heretofore protecting the city of New Orleans. In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, more than 1,800 people died and an estimated 400,000 individuals were displaced due to the loss of housing and employment and dangerous health conditions rendering many sectors of the city uninhabitable.

In this volume, Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg take two seemingly different cities and link them through the shared experience of post-disaster recovery. This common ground sets up the key objective of the study, which, according to the authors, is to examine the effects of a free market–driven approach to economic recovery and community redevelopment.

ment following a disaster. They posit that this approach to recovery only serves to further marginalize already vulnerable communities by failing to focus on principles of “public benefit” (21) and the collective good, which are meant to lessen community-based inequities, thereby aiding in the mitigation of risk to future hazards. Furthermore, Gotham and Greenberg argue that factors such as the “privatization of disaster aid” and “devolution of recovery responsibilities” (ix) serve to perpetuate disparities already felt by segments of the population.

According to the authors, the idea for this work came from their shared interest in the focus of two urban areas that juxtaposed commercial rebuilding through tourism against post-disaster redevelopment of homes and businesses in order to directly meet the needs of those who had been dislocated. The book starts with a discussion of the theoretical construction of “crisis cities,” which the authors define as “cities that have been transformed over the long term, and on a broad scale, through the process of crisis-driven urbanization” (16). They posit that a free-market approach that places privatized post-disaster resources into the hands of the private sector results in socio-spatial inequities leading to a perpetuation of risk and vulnerability in these urban settings. The volume concludes with several key lessons garnered from the study. In the chapters between, the reader is introduced to the political landscape of disasters and the process of redevelopment, debates on risk and resilience, and issues of rebranding to promote a rebirth of sorts despite the lingering social and economic disparities of the affected populations.

Gotham and Greenberg set their work apart from the growing volumes on disaster recovery by using a theoretical lens that insightfully integrates historical political context across both cities to understand what the authors refer to as “crisis-driven urbanization” (11). A methodical study of conditions pre- and post-disaster points to an evidence-based shift in thinking about urban vulnerability. The intertwined relationship among economic, cultural, political, and spatial inequities is a precursor for a self-fulfilling prophecy influencing future urban crises. Gotham and Greenberg argue that the dynamics underlying market-driven urbanization, which often-times produce inequitable development of urban places, are not confined to cities such as New York and New Orleans. Rather, the authors have posited a set of commonalities derived through market-driven forces that set the stage for the development of crisis cities across the nation. According to the

Gotham and Greenberg, “the actions of market and state agents have the potential to transform disasters into social and ecological crises” (11). They illustrate their construct of crisis-driven urbanization across five dimensions. The first dimension is what they term *risks and vulnerabilities*; in this section, they consider socio-spatial inequality, particularly through the public sector, and the fiscal restraints that result in social needs outweighing available resources. The second dimension, *crisis-framing*, involves a struggle among competing groups to shape the debate on both the crisis event and the strategy of recovery. The third dimension, *short-term recovery*, provides a platform for uneven recovery through assorted public-private partnerships, issues of privatization and devolution of disaster aid, and what the authors refer to as “post-disaster urban rebranding” (12). The fourth dimension of the study’s framework is *long-term redevelopment*, in which strategies such as tax incentives for recovery and other market-driven policies manifest post-disaster. Finally, the fifth dimension, *deepening risks and vulnerabilities*, brings the framework full circle by describing how threats from the conduct of uneven redevelopment and recovery heighten vulnerability to future disasters. Gotham and Greenberg assert that the framework they present aids in bridging scholarly work relevant to disaster risk with more contemporary and critical literatures in urbanization and capitalism.

The methodology used by Gotham and Greenberg involves a historical comparative analysis of pre- and post-factors relevant to the natural disaster in New Orleans stemming from Hurricane Katrina and the terrorist attack of 9/11 in New York. Chapter 2 pulls the reader back several decades to the 1970s to investigate the social and economic crises that shaped cities across the United States. The authors reference this period of urban crisis to frame the effects of a global recession that was taking a toll through layoffs, a declining tax base, and significant population loss to the suburbs. Accordingly, Gotham and Greenberg argue that such socioeconomic-spatial upheavals contributed to the rise in inequality along with development policies that raised vulnerability of risk for people and places. The chapters that follow examine evidence from post-disaster recovery efforts dealing with 9/11 and Katrina. In the case of post-9/11 recovery, the authors give attention to the restructuring of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to include the new Department of Homeland Security. This action is viewed as one example in reshaping emergency management policy and regulations to

include privatization, followed by similar urban policy restructuring that undergirds the development of crisis cities. Another comparative example presented by the authors as evidence of regulatory change that promoted destabilization of opportunity is the federal restructuring of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Here the data suggest that this policy change provided a pathway for the formation of independent authorities, which managed to circumvent public benefit and participation and negatively influenced lower-income minority communities.

The concluding chapter addresses lessons learned within the context of disasters and the resulting crises. Here, empirical findings are discussed through the theoretical framework used in the study and are linked back to historical factors respective to pre- and post-disaster development in both cities. As Gotham and Greenberg suggest, “New York and New Orleans have been affected by ‘wounds’ inflicted not only through disasters but also through policies” (22–23). They point out that communities in effect sustain a double form of trauma, first from the destructive forces of the disaster and second through the inequitable approaches to recovery and redevelopment. As a result, the authors describe how “disaster activism” (23) emerged in response to crisis conditions, mobilizing groups to advocate for an equitable and just development process that promotes sustainability, thus breaking the cycle of crisis cities.

Gotham and Greenberg empirically examine pre-disaster factors that heighten threats to vulnerability and risk in urban cities based upon government and private influences in policy development. The case examples of New York and the terror attack of 9/11 and the city of New Orleans and the devastation from Hurricane Katrina certainly highlight the need for careful consideration among urban planners, public administrators, policy makers, and grassroots activist organizations to assess the potential for becoming the next crisis city.

Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans offers an interesting perspective on risk and resilience in urbanized areas. The authors put forth a critical theoretical framework to examine post-disaster redevelopment and, in doing so, uncover a confluence of regulatory and policy issues, along with public-private interactions that produce inequities in social, economic, and spatial outcomes. This volume provides an opportunity for scholars to further consider elements of political decision

making within the context of urban planning and redevelopment in assessing levels of risk to future disaster events. Much of the academic literature examines aspects of social and spatial vulnerability, but little evidence is available on ways in which urbanized community development strategies undermine the capacity for resilience in cities. Additional case studies and comparative analyses will add to the foundation provided here by Gotham and Greenberg. Indeed, this book would make a nice addition to graduate courses in urban planning, disaster management, policy analysis, and political affairs. The case studies and research methodology provide ample content for classroom discussion and demonstrate real world application.

Likewise, the practitioner community will find content on crisis-driven development and post-disaster rebranding important as the authors point to specific pitfalls encountered by the two case study cities. The rigor of Gotham and Greenberg's research adds to an evidence-based debate in the realm of crisis and redevelopment, offering lessons that will aid those engaged in both public and private urban investment ventures. Professionals in emergency management roles, particularly those responsible for preparedness and recovery planning in large urbanized areas, will recognize the challenges described in the book as relevant to the devolution of disaster recovery response and a growing reliance on privatized redevelopment. *Crisis Cities* should serve as required reading in this new era of crisis planning and recovery.

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Failing Our Fathers: Confronting the Crisis of Economically Vulnerable Nonresident Fathers. By Ronald B. Mincy, Monique Jethwani, and Serena Klempin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 208. \$29.95 (cloth).

In *Failing Our Fathers: Confronting the Crisis of Economically Vulnerable Nonresident Fathers*, Ronald Mincy, Monique Jethwani, and Serena Klempin take a thorough look at the large and growing population of vulnerable nonresident fathers in the United States. The authors lay out the historical trend and current prevalence of nonresident fathers, illustrate critical issues to their vulnerability such as employment and child support, discuss the contributions of involved fathers and the challenges to that involvement, and

finally give an overview of the current state of policy and potential reforms. *Failing Our Fathers* challenges its audience to rethink the social construction of nonresident fathers, focusing on the vulnerable state of the majority of those fathers at the intersection of child support policy and enforcement. The authors tackle the work with a multimethod approach, using existing research and newly collected data from interviews with nonresident fathers that capture their unique perspectives. Social policies aimed at increasing monetary support for children often put an overwhelming burden on nonresident fathers, especially those who are unemployed or employed less than full-time, and policy reforms are not catching up to meet this need, particularly during periods of strained economic conditions such as the recent recession. Throughout their work, the authors illustrate several important themes, challenge existing narratives, and identify gaps in the literature, including consideration of fathers who want to better themselves, their parenting, or their relationships with their children, as well as fathers who are willing to pay child support but are unable to do so. The authors create a readable, evidence-packed book that allows a wide audience to understand the many issues vulnerable nonresident fathers face.

Failing Our Fathers begins by asking the reader to rethink how nonresident fathers have been viewed by society, by policy makers, and within the knowledge base (chap. 1). The authors first take a historical approach, identifying changing trends throughout the country in areas such as marriage decline and single-parent birth rates and highlighting economic conditions affecting low-income fathers that contribute to the dramatic rise in nonresident fatherhood. In response to these unsettling trends, policy makers have attempted to deter the increase in families with nonresidential fathers by discouraging fathers from moving out through financial disincentives. After a backlog of uncollected child support raised attention and the rate of single mothers on government assistance grew, policy in the mid-1990s gave new powers to enforcement practices, which, for vulnerable nonresident fathers, resulted in unintended consequences, such as insurmountable child support debt, fathers' inability to meet their own basic needs, potential future employment barriers, and sometimes incarceration. Research presented in the book estimates that today the United States has 7.5 million nonresident fathers, 5.3 million of whom earn an income that may make paying for child support or basic costs of living difficult. The authors argue that a larger view of vulnerable nonresident fathers should be addressed, expanding from the typical focus on young, inner-city minority fathers. The

authors cite data supporting similar trends across the nation and across race and ethnicity.

The story of employment for nonresident fathers (as told in chap. 2) is bleak. The authors use the recent recession of the late 2000s to illustrate the effects of a large-scale economic crisis on this population of fathers and to compare their employment conditions to those of several other groups in order to illustrate these fathers' uneven outcomes. Unsurprisingly, nonresident fathers share demographic characteristics with groups that fared worse during the recession. Males were more likely to be unemployed or lose their jobs during the recession and also dealt with longer-term unemployment and difficulty reentering the workforce. Similarly, lower-educated and lower-income males experienced more job loss and less-than-full employment, as well as longer or chronic unemployment. The book also illustrates employment variations and challenges for related and representative groups of ex-offenders, young inner-city men, and those with child support orders. Again, father interviews help illustrate the unique intersection of employment difficulties and nonresident fatherhood, telling the stories of several fathers who struggled to recover from the economic downturn and to meet their financial obligations of child support.

Chapter 3 describes how nonresident fathers struggle to navigate the complex system of policies guiding child support collections and enforcement. The authors' discussion of child support makes an important distinction between fathers who will not pay and those who cannot pay. This distinction of willingness is an important shift in the narrative of the nonresident father but is more difficult to illustrate within the confines of the existing literature and without the book's mixed-methods approach. Examples from new interviews help to illustrate the complicated system of child support in a way that goes beyond the scope of a typical policy review or analysis, presenting fathers who are willing to support their children and their children's mothers but who are unable to keep up with support payments, fall into a hole of debt, and face harsh consequences due to a change in employment or income. The policy discussion within the child support section uses New York as a case example of policies adapted with an understanding of some of these issues, offering relief to nonresident fathers through tax credits similar to the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

In the past few decades, the literature has begun to consider nonresident fathers' contributions as parents as well as the challenges they face when seeking parental involvement. In chapters 4 and 5, the authors continue

challenging the reader to examine the issue from the point of view of fathers, here presenting emerging perspectives from fathers on their role as parents. As research has established that nonresident fathers are more present in their children's lives than was previously expected, the literature has begun to consider the importance of paternal involvement and of fathers valuing time with their children and how that involvement contributes to a child's development. This section of the book heavily focuses on the presence of nonresident fathers in their children's lives instead of focusing on their absence. The authors, through fathers' voices, discuss fathers' roles as teachers, friends, advisors, or disciplinarians to their children. These narratives are important in helping develop fathers' identities beyond that of breadwinner, and they help to explain how fathers' inability to be breadwinners leads to their having less contact with their children, even as these fathers see their role, while changing, as an important one. Of course, making these contributions requires contact and involvement, and that access can be difficult. Chapter 5 outlines the challenges nonresident fathers face when they want to be involved in their children's lives. While nonresidential status and physical distance are obvious barriers, a more thorough view of the issue might identify additional barriers, such as the relationship between the mother and father, how the parents work together or coparent, changes to access or gatekeeping, access when a parental relationship does not exist, what happens when other partners and families become involved, and what happens when the father's personal issues, such as domestic violence or substance abuse, lead to permanent or legal barriers. Interestingly, as noted later, promoting paternal involvement can be useful at increasing child support payments, so a thorough understanding of these potential barriers is necessary.

In chapter 6, the authors summarize potential reforms and innovations to policy, child support enforcement, and father support services that might offer nonresident fathers some relief. A brief historical glance, this time into the roots of welfare state policy, helps to frame these developments in today's child support collection and enforcement policies. Enforcement policies developed in the 1980s and 1990s aimed at increasing monetary support to children and mothers by shoring up high rates of fathers not paying child support and potentially deterring fathers from leaving the home, even though fathers may not have been there to begin with, but these policies had unintended consequences for vulnerable nonresident fathers who could not pay. A complicated picture emerges of the many parties involved in child

support enforcement: dueling federal and state government policies, state control over enforcement and collections, and the judicial systems carrying out the work of setting the child support orders, sometimes with incomplete information or unable to make adjustments when economic situations change for fathers. Key policy mechanisms put in place in the mid-1990s have often been identified as being too harsh or burdensome on vulnerable fathers, and the response to rectify the harsh consequences, especially for low-income or unemployed fathers, has been slow. Policy innovations within states, such as modifying child support orders, arrears abatement, increasing access and visitation to children (leading to increases in child support payments), and tax credits, have all been tried, yet these promising innovations are either underutilized or underresearched. After the 1996 law, the majority of states have implemented some sort of reform, often involving the judicial system and court orders. A unique tax credit in New York State, which is the subject of a case study in the book, has the potential to provide some relief but seems to be underutilized.

Failing Our Fathers is a well-executed and thoughtful look into a complex issue with a limited but growing knowledge base. The authors weave together a number of perspectives to build on this limited knowledge of nonresident fathers, and they address gaps in the existing research and illustrate the complexity of the issue using their newly collected interview data. They set up clear challenges and expectations for the book and for the reader, and they meet those expectations well. For example, they challenge preconceived notions of nonresident fathers presented in past literature to show common trends or challenges, highlighting father involvement in parenting, which is a more recent trend in the literature. They expand the discussion of fathers by highlighting differences between groups of fathers, such as divorced and never-married fathers, two populations not often individually distinguished, and when nonresident fathers are not clearly distinguished in the topic area's knowledge base, the authors analyze new data or compile evidence on characteristics common to nonresident fathers. They add new research, including the voices of these vulnerable nonresident fathers themselves, to remind readers that these fathers' perspectives have been mostly absent in a conversation that is completely about them, and the authors drive home this point through thoughtfully constructed interviews that also make for accessible moments and widen the appeal of the book to a larger audience.

A minor drawback of the book is the policy section discussion's lack of a clear framing of state-by-state policies or innovations while also relying on a somewhat strained train metaphor. The New York case example clearly illustrated their innovation but led me to think that more light might be shed on other specific states' policies in order to extend the authors' challenge directly to state-level policy makers. While there are other examples of state-level innovations and the majority of states seem to be doing some sort of innovation, most states are summarized only briefly, if at all. A greater level of detail on state-level policies may have helped further the challenge the authors pose to the nation. Additionally, the policy chapter uses the analogy of a train to illustrate the movement of established policy, reforms, and innovations to child support or enforcement. The authors describe how the caboose, the carriage car, and the engine of the train each house policies or reforms and represent where each is in implementation or funding. The analogy of the train cars was somewhat useful but not necessary to the argument, and I was not left with a clear view of where the train was heading.

Failing Our Fathers is an important work that is accessible to a wide audience. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in nonresident fathers and who is working in the practice, policy, or research disciplines. For those who are newer to literature on this population of fathers, this book provides a thoughtful overview and historical context, a logical view of the relevant issues and policy implications, and a helpful illustration of a number of different challenges through a multimethod approach that includes father interviews. There are many unknowns in the literature on nonresident fathers, and exploring this topic through expanded quantitative interviews helps to broaden readers' understanding of critical factors nonresident fathers face. *Failing Our Fathers* highlights nonresident fathers who want to be providers and caregivers to their children, a group of fathers who are reflected in more recent literature but who were not recognized in prior father-blaming literature and policy. This work is important for vulnerable nonresident fathers, as the challenges they face are not going away without reform, yet policy moves forward slowly.

Aaron Banman
University of Chicago

Brief Notices

NEW AND UPCOMING TITLES OF INTEREST TO SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE SCHOLARS

Academics in Action! A Model for Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Service. Edited by Sandra L. Barnes, Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein, Bernadette Doykos, Nina C. Martin, and Allison McGuire. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016. Pp. 288. \$90.00 (cloth); \$35.00 (paper).

Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss, and Moral Injury. By Brett T. Litz, Leslie Lebowitz, Matt J. Gray, and William P. Nash. New York: Guilford Publications, 2015. Pp. 205. \$35.00 (cloth).

American Generosity: Who Gives and Why. By Patricia Snell Herzog and Heather E. Price. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 376. \$34.95 (cloth).

Analysing Social Policy Concepts and Language: Comparative and Transnational Perspectives. Edited by Daniel Béland and Klaus Petersen. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2015. Pp. 272. \$115.00 (cloth); \$42.95 (paper).

Border Lives: Fronterizos, Transnational Migrants, and Commuters in Tijuana. By Sergio Chávez. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 224. \$99.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Changing Behavior in DBT®: Problem Solving in Action. By Heidi L. Heard and Michaela A. Swales. New York: Guilford Press, 2016. Pp. 266. \$35.00 (cloth).

Deeply Divided: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Postwar America. Revised and updated. By Doug McAdam and Karina Kloos. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 416. \$21.95 (paper).

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains. By Alexandra Lutnick. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. Pp. 200. \$105.00 (cloth); \$35.00 (paper).

Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. By Matthew Desmond. New York: Crown Publishers, 2016. Pp. 432. \$28.00 (cloth).

Group Work Research. By Charles D. Garvin, Richard M. Tolman, and Mark J. MacGowan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 184. \$37.50 (paper).

Integrating the Inner City: The Promise and Perils of Mixed-Income Public Housing Transformation. By Robert J. Chaskin and Mark L. Joseph. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. Pp. 344. \$40.00 (cloth).

The Midas Paradox: Financial Markets, Government Policy Shocks, and the Great Depression. By Scott Sumner. Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2015. Pp. 560. \$37.95 (cloth).

Poor Justice: How the Poor Fare in the Courts. By Vicki Lens. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 256. \$39.95 (paper).

Practice Placement in Social Work: Innovative Approaches for Effective Teaching and Learning. Edited by Avril Bellinger and Deirdre Ford. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2016. Pp. 208. \$110.00 (cloth); \$36.95 (paper).

Progressive Punishment: Job Loss, Jail Growth, and the Neoliberal Logic of Carceral Expansion. By Judah Schept. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Pp. 320. \$89.00 (cloth); \$27.00 (paper).

Sentencing Fragments: Penal Reform in America, 1975–2025. By Michael Tonry. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 320. \$35.00 (cloth).

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Supporting Adult Care-Leavers: International Good Practice. By Suellen Murray. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2015. Pp. 208. \$99.00 (cloth); \$42.95 (paper).

Why Are They Angry with Us? Essays on Race. By Larry E. Davis. Chicago: Lyceum Books, 2016. Pp. 150. \$34.95 (cloth).

Women Rough Sleepers in Europe: Homelessness and Victims of Domestic Abuse. By Kate Moss and Paramjit Singh. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2015. Pp. 224. \$110.00 (cloth).

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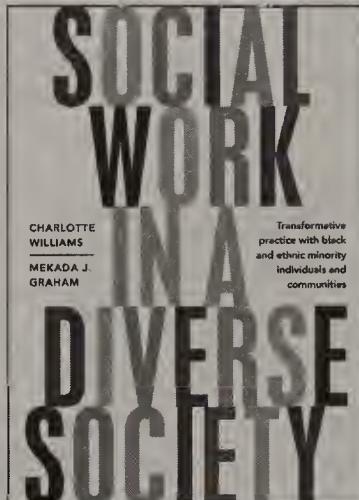
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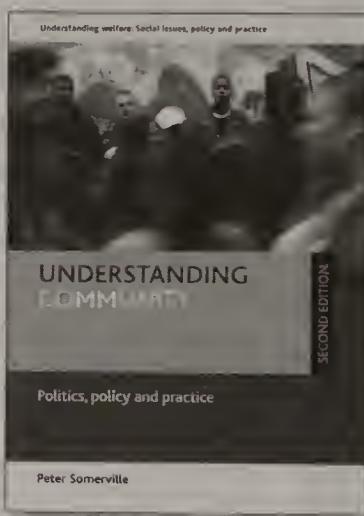
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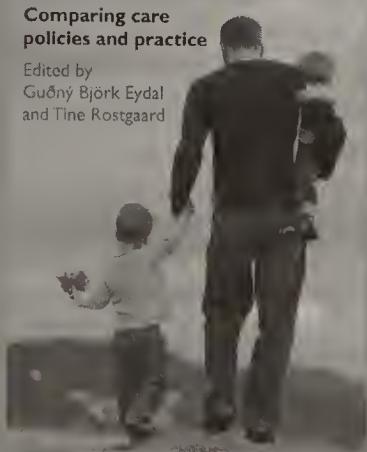
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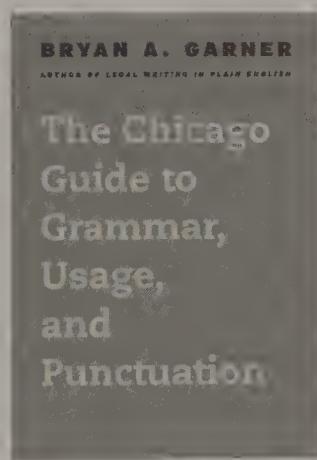
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